

The influence of third wave feminism on Dutch museums and exhibitions between 1990 and 2005

An analysis of exhibitions and museum policies

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Specialization Applied History

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Wordcount: 19398

Master's Thesis

10 June 2025

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the influence of third-wave feminism on Dutch museums between 1990 and 2005, with a focus on the positionality of three prominent art museums: Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Centraal Museum Utrecht, and Museum Arnhem. The research investigates how these institutions integrated feminist principles into their policies and exhibition practices, particularly concerning the representation of female visual artists. In the late 2000s, feminist theorists have already promoted a new feminist museology where the museum practices are central. Therefore, this thesis studies the following research question: How did museums position themselves vis-à-vis the third feminist wave and female visual artists in the Netherlands during the period 1990-2005? This project employs both qualitative analysis and cultural performance theory on the museum policies, promotional material and more general documentation of the museums, like meeting notes. The analysis shows that there is a growing awareness of the inequality of female visual artists. Actual change is limited, and it comes from individuals or is focused on the internal structures and the management of the museum. Municipalities and organisation that work together with the museums do see the need for social change and women's emancipation. This is however limited to changes in leadership and not changes in the exhibition program. The analysed exhibitions display social situations, which are convincing the visitor of societal messages implied in the art and the messages of the art. With this analysis, the main finding in this thesis is the museums becoming more aware of gender inequalities in the art world. The museums make efforts to highlight female visual artists and societal themes in exhibition programs, but the overall representation remains disproportionately low. This thesis presents the need for museums to engage with feminist theories. Additionally, museums can play a crucial role in raising awareness on social inequalities and promoting gender equality in the art world and cultural sector.

KEYWORDS: *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Centraal Museum Schiedam, Museum Arnhem, cultural performance, third-wave feminism, intersectionality, exhibition, women's emancipation, museum studies.*

Inhoudsopgave

ABSTRACT	2
Introduction.....	5
<i>Research Question</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Theoretical concepts</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Literature Review</i>	<i>12</i>
Third-wave feminism in the international context.....	12
Third-wave feminism and the Netherlands	13
Museum studies and the relation to third-wave feminism.....	15
<i>Sources</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Methods</i>	<i>22</i>
Contextualising the museum	24
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>The rise of the museum.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Role of the government, province and municipality.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Dutch cultural policies.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>30</i>
Stedelijk Museum Schiedam	32
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Positionality of Stedelijk Museum Schiedam in the policies</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Exhibitions</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Participation women's emancipation movement Schiedam</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>42</i>
Centraal Museum Utrecht	44
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Positionality of Centraal Museum Utrecht in the policies</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Exhibitions</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>52</i>
Museum Arnhem.....	53
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Positionality of Museum Arnhem in the policies</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Exhibitions</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>61</i>
Conclusion	62
Bibliography	65
Appendix I.....	70

Introduction

In the Netherlands today, women are more visibly represented as artists and subjects in museums. However, as recent as 2019, only 13% of the art exhibited in Dutch museums was made by women.¹ More generally, female visual artists have often been forgotten and removed from art history, up until today.² This observation is not only applicable to the art world; in the Dutch cultural sector as a whole, women and female visual artists remain underrepresented.³ Nowadays, museums are more vocal about the representation of women in their museums, and the number of exhibitions on female visual artists is growing.⁴ The terms ‘inclusivity’ and ‘diversity’ have become increasingly prominent as touchstones for the cultural sector over the past decade as well.⁵ And this trend is equally reflected in the museum sector specifically. We can recognize this trend, for example, in a recent exhibition in Stedelijk Museum Schiedam on Adya van Rees-Dutilh and Otto van Rees, an artist duo that worked within the avant-garde genre. Adya and Otto contribute to the abstract art development, cubism, and dadaism.⁶ For this exhibition, the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam decided to use the woman’s name first, instead of her husband’s name, in a recent exhibition. The artist duo Adya and Otto are mostly known as Otto van Rees and his wife. Stedelijk Museum Schiedam decided to name Adya first in the exhibition title, *Adya en Otto, pioniers binnen de avant-garde*, because of the dominance of Otto in their popularity.⁷ Not only is the duo usually mentioned under the name ‘Otto and his wife,’ but even the family sees Otto van Rees as more important when they made the catalogue for the exhibition. In this catalogue Otto is mentioned first, and after a comment from the museum on this, the family stayed with the name and stated that Otto van Rees was more important. Stedelijk Museum Schiedam states that Adya is not appreciated enough for her contribution to the art world; therefore, the museum decided to keep her name as the first in the exhibition title.⁸

Museums are cultural institutions that try to respond to developments and changes in society. Museums are thereby challenged to stay relevant and develop, together with society,

¹ Redactie, ‘Nederlandse kunstenaressen maken te weinig goede kunst, feministen huilen’, TPO.NL, 4 February 2019, <https://tpo.nl/2019/02/04/nederlandse-kunstenaressen-maken-te-weinig-goede-kunst-feministen-huilen/>.

² Redactie, ‘Nederlandse kunstenaressen’.

³ Redactie, ‘Nederlandse kunstenaressen’.

⁴ ‘Waar zijn de vrouwen in de kunst?’, Historiek, 8 November 2024, <https://historiek.net/waar-zijn-de-vrouwen/159921/>.

⁵ ‘Waar zijn de vrouwen in de kunst?’, Historiek.

⁶ ‘Adya en Otto’, *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog), accessed 14-01-2025, <https://stedelijkmuseumschiedam.nl/tentoonstelling/adya-en-otto/>.

⁷ ‘Adya en Otto’, *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam*.

⁸ ‘Adya en Otto’, *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam*.

over time.⁹ Furthermore, museums are becoming more important in the shaping of society and therefore have more societal influence. The goal of the museum, the policy the museum is following, and the exhibitions that fit within this goal and policy are taking the shape of society and, at the same time, influencing society.¹⁰ As shown in the example above, diversity and inclusion are becoming important themes in society and museums nowadays. These themes are playing a more important role in exhibitions, but also in the policy of museums. Even though museums are taking the first steps, there is still a long road ahead before a museum and the art world are treating the artists equally. At the same time, as shown in the example, there is already a countermovement that tries to push the museums and the art world back to the male-dominated times.¹¹ Nowadays, this change in the attitude towards female visual artists and the growing representation of women in the art world stems from the growing fourth-wave of feminism.¹² To what extent did museums integrate the ideas from the third feminist wave? What motives are there to adopt or not adopt these ideas? This, then, raises the question: How did museums position themselves vis-à-vis the third feminist wave and female visual artists in the Netherlands during the period 1990-2005?

⁹ 'Musea', Boekmanstichting, accessed 21-01-2025, <https://www.boekman.nl/cultuurindex/sectoren/musea/>.

¹⁰ 'Musea', Boekmanstichting.

¹¹ 'Adya en Otto', *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam*.

¹² 'De vierde feministische golf is anders, via social media weten mensen elkaar te vinden', NPO Radio 1, accessed 14-01-2025, <https://www.nporadio1.nl/nieuws/binnenland/013af70c-d785-4cec-9207-141c7f7954db/de-vierde-feministische-golf-is-anders-via-social-media-weten-mensen-elkaar-te-vinden>.

Research Question

This thesis focuses on the positionality of three prominent art museums in the Netherlands, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Centraal Museum Utrecht, and Museum Arnhem, in relation to third-wave feminism and female visual artists in the Netherlands during the period 1990-2005. To find out how Dutch art museums positioned themselves vis-à-vis third-wave feminism, I investigate which policies these museums adopted, how the view towards female visual artists was shaped, and how this view changed over time. I also research the policies related to the exhibitions and specifically examine the exhibitions on female visual artists. The research question focuses on the positionality of the museum in general, the visibility of female visual artists in exhibitions and the way this visibility takes shape, and the influence from the municipality.

In the first step, I investigate the positionality of the museums based on the policies that were instated in the time period 1990-2005 and how these policies relate to third-wave feminism. During this first step of the research, I also examine the specific missions and the goals of the museums, related to both their position in society and their position within the museum landscape. Besides the policies, goals, and missions, I analyse the meeting notes of the curatorial meetings. These meetings highlight the emphasis for the museum and where the main focus for the exhibitions and policies should lie.

In a second step, I investigate the museum exhibitions themselves. When the selected museums exhibited the art of female visual artists during the period 1990-2005, how did the museums do so? Here, the focus lies on the documentation that is created while setting up an exhibition. This documentation consists of the correspondence with the artists, galleries, other museums, the municipality, and the press releases of the exhibition. This documentation provides additional information behind the motivations and goals of an exhibition. The examination of the exhibitions says more about the implementation of policies, how the subsidies the museums receive are put to use, and the influence of the Dutch political climate at large. The way the female visual artists are represented is also of importance. How much space do the artists get in the museums? How much promotion does the museum do for the exhibition on female visual artists? And are the exhibitions on female visual artists solo exhibitions, or are they more artists also presenting their art?

In a third and last step, I investigate the role of the municipality. Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Centraal Museum Utrecht, and Museum Arnhem are all museums connected to the city. The role of the municipality in subsidies and policies is therefore important to analyse. In

this last step, it is crucial to look at the financial side of the museum and the way the municipality is influencing the museums with subsidies.

The sub questions in the chapters on the museums focus on the broader societal messages in the exhibitions on female visual artists. This question is revisited in all three analyses of the museums. The focus lies on the three steps explained above. The first chapter focuses more on the contextualisation of the museum landscape in the Netherlands. This chapter also dives into the general roles on the national government, the provinces and the municipality in the context of the museum. This contextualisation helps with a deeper understanding of the operation of museums and specifically regional museums.

Theoretical concepts

The first theoretical concept in this thesis is third-wave feminist intersectionality. To put the latter in a more understandable framework, it is important to look at first- and second-wave feminism. In the first wave, the focus lies more on the suffrage and the political participation of women, where in the second wave the notions of freedom, equality, justice and self-actualization are rising.¹³ Following the definition from R. Claire Snyder, third-wave feminism is a continuation of second-wave feminism.¹⁴ Third-wave feminism, however, is not the same as the second wave. During the second wave, feminists were filled with hatred to men, racism, classism, and homophobia, according to activists involved in the third wave. The third wave was more focused on equality for all people and more accessible for people of colour. The intersectionality that is important for the third wave is not only showing itself in the views, but it is also visible in the accessibility for participation.¹⁵ During third-wave feminism, this diversity was increasingly defined in intersectional terms, to highlight the complexities of human identities. These elements of third-wave feminism are influenced by postmodernism, where gender and identity are becoming more fluid, according to Leslie Heywood.¹⁶ Third-wave feminists also have diverse identities and it is different for every individual.¹⁷ The intersectionality is also supported by Elizabeth Evans, who states that intersectionality is ‘the recognition of multiple and overlapping points of oppression’.¹⁸

Looking more into the relation between the third and the second wave, it shows that in the third wave there is a shift in the focus. Gender-based equality becomes more important in the third wave, where the second wave focused on the rights of western women.¹⁹ Heywood states that postmodern influences, the ideas about the self, sexual identity and gender, and the definition of ‘women’ becomes more intersectional and interdisciplinary.²⁰ However, third-wave feminism is not a postmodern movement, but rather a response to the latter and a post-Marxist world where foundations and narratives are questioned.²¹ In short, it could be stated that third-wave feminism is a countermovement and a continuation of second-wave feminism.

¹³ Elizabeth Evans, ‘What Makes a (Third) Wave?’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 18, no. 3 (2 July 2016): 411, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2015.1027627>.

¹⁴ R. Claire Snyder, ‘What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 34, no. 1 (September 2008): 192, <https://doi.org/10.1086/588436>.

¹⁵ Lisa Jane Disch and M. E. Hawkesworth, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, Oxford Books (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 987.

¹⁶ Snyder, ‘What Is Third-Wave Feminism?’ 187.

¹⁷ Snyder, ‘What Is Third-Wave Feminism?’ 177.

¹⁸ Evans, ‘What Makes a (Third) Wave?’ 416.

¹⁹ Snyder, ‘What Is Third-Wave Feminism?’ 191.

²⁰ Snyder, ‘What Is Third-Wave Feminism?’ 186-187.

²¹ Snyder, ‘What Is Third-Wave Feminism?’ 187.

Intersectionality, individualism and gender-based equality are the main concepts in third-wave feminism, this also shows the complexity of the movement.

Furthermore, it is important to look at feminist theory. In the early 1970s, during second-wave feminism, feminist theory began to become institutionalized itself within academic scholarship.²² The field of feminist theory is interdisciplinary and complex. The feminist ideas from the late twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century are characterised, by Mary Hawkesworth and Lisa Disch, as the following three trends: the effort to denaturalize difference, the effort to challenge the production of universal and impartial knowledge, and the effort to engage with the complexity of intersectionality.²³ Feminist theory sees race and sex as a political construct, ways of thinking and privilege play an important role in this. By questioning these constructs, and with that denaturalizing differences, feminist theory opens a new field for research on the regulation and demarcation of the body. Besides these new views on the body, feminist theory sees 'difference' through the lens of decolonisation and diaspora.²⁴ Feminist theory also has an increased emphasis on intersectionality. The latter notion is used to raise awareness to the complex ways in which power is concealed in specific bodies, not only in terms of gender, but also in terms of race, class, able-bodiedness and other dimensions. This increased emphasis on intersectionality also stimulates a more critical view on the influence of the various identities from someone and how people are treated.²⁵ Feminist theory is thus on the examination of mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion with the focus on gender and race.²⁶

Besides feminist theory, cultural performance is also of importance in this thesis. Jeffrey Alexander defines cultural performance as 'a social process where actors display the meaning of their social situation to others'.²⁷ According to Dorus Hoebink, through cultural performance, we are able to do justice to the layered exhibitions and presentations in museums. At the same time, cultural performance enables us to also do justice to the social context that are embedded in the museums.²⁸ Presentations and exhibitions in museums have become more theatrical over the years; to analyse the museum and the activities it is not uncommon to use terms and definitions that are rooted in theatre.²⁹ Besides the theatre

²² Disch and Hawkesworth, *Feminist Theory*, 2.

²³ Disch and Hawkesworth, *Feminist Theory*, 4.

²⁴ Disch and Hawkesworth, *Feminist Theory*, 4-6.

²⁵ Disch and Hawkesworth, *Feminist Theory*, 8-9.

²⁶ Disch and Hawkesworth, *Feminist Theory*, 9.

²⁷ Jeffrey C. Alexander, 'Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance Between Ritual and Strategy', *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 4 (2004): 529, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0735-2751.2004.00233.x>.

²⁸ Dorus Hoebink, 'Erfgoed Als Schouwspel' (2016), 9, <http://hdl.handle.net/1765/79796>.

²⁹ Hoebink, 'Erfgoed Als Schouwspel', 22.

context, performance and cultural performance is also analyzed through re-enactment and living history, especially open air museums. Re-enactment and living history in museums suggest a more direct, physical and interactive experience with the past, according to Jerome de Groot, this makes for a more storytelling and personal experience for a diverse public.³⁰

In 1954, Philip Rhys Adams shed a new light on art museums in comparison with theatre décor. Following Adams, the objects in the museums would be the actors in the theatre and a museum would then be the mediator between the objects and the public. Nowadays, this theory is outdated and museum studies state that the objects in the museums do not act themselves. More recently, museum scholars have stated that the museum visitor is the actor that is making the object work.³¹ Diving further into the more recent museum studies, museums are socially embedded institutions that have certain views on the past and transmit this to the public.³² Preziosi and Farago state that objects in the museums are ‘staged’ and ‘framed’, in order for the visitor to interpret these objects in a certain way.³³ Here, again, the objects are not the ‘actor’, but the viewer is the one that can make the object work. Preziosi and Farago also emphasize the ‘performance’ of the museum, the objects are a personification of the maker and at the same time objectify the maker. This contributes to the discussion on museums and their Eurocentric, colonial, national and sometimes even racist views that ensure the inequality in society.³⁴ The museum is ‘performing’ the objects in a way that enables this existing structure.

³⁰ Hoebink, ‘Erfgoed Als Schouwspel’, 22.

³¹ Hoebink, ‘Erfgoed Als Schouwspel’, 22-23.

³² Hoebink, ‘Erfgoed Als Schouwspel’, 23.

³³ Hoebink, ‘Erfgoed Als Schouwspel’, 23.

³⁴ Hoebink, ‘Erfgoed Als Schouwspel’, 23.

Literature Review

The focus of research on third-wave feminism goes beyond its definition. An important part of the academic debate on third-wave feminism is location in society and activism. The first part will discuss the international context and the societal component within the academic debate. The second part will concentrate on the context of the Netherlands, specifically what is written on third-wave feminism in the Netherlands. The last part will focus on the museum studies as a whole and in relation to feminism and society: what research has already been done on the topic of museums and feminism?

Third-wave feminism in the international context

When analysing literature on third-wave feminism, two trends are worth mentioning. The first trend focuses on the definition of third-wave feminism and its ideas as discussed in the theoretical framework. Intersectionality, individualism and gender-based equality are the main concepts in third-wave feminism, which also shows the complexity of the movement. A more theological and philosophical approach to third-wave feminism, is seeing the third wave as a cross-generational movement. The ideas, wisdom, memories, questions and unresolved conflicts are passed on and can be resolved by dialogue between the different generations.³⁵

The second trend focuses on the type of movement that third-wave feminism is. Because of the complexity of the feminist movement, it is difficult to find one specific place where third-wave feminism is active. With the emergence of feminist history, third-wave feminism continued to be a political movement with social influences from Karl Marx.³⁶ Not only Marxism is mentioned as an influence, postmodernism and poststructuralist ideas also influenced feminist history and third-wave feminism.³⁷ Catherine Harnois states that the third wave is less focused on the characteristic of a social movement and more on the extension of the academic field.³⁸ However, at the same time, third-wave feminism is characterised as a social movement where activism and the social aspect are important elements. Inspired by intersectionality theory, postmodernist and poststructuralist influences, postcolonial influences and a more global understanding of feminism, the younger generation develops a

³⁵ Els Maeckelberghe, 'Across the Generations in Feminist Theology: From Second to Third Wave Feminisms', *Feminist Theology* 8, no. 23 (January 2000): 63–69, <https://doi.org/10.1177/096673500000002312>.

³⁶ Mark Donnelly and Claire Norton, *Doing History* (Routledge, 2011), 145–146.

³⁷ Mark Donnelly and Claire Norton, *Doing History* (Routledge, 2011), 145–146.

³⁸ Catherine Harnois, 'Re-Presenting Feminisms: Past, Present, and Future', *NWSA Journal* 20, no. 1 (March 2008): 121, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2008.a236183>.

new agenda.³⁹ This makes the third wave more political; feminism was more diverse and with this diversity, new agenda and new energy, the movement got blown into a new life.⁴⁰ Not only on the political side did feminism reemerge, socially the movement also got blown into a new life. The intersectionality of the movement made for new voices who picked up the women's movement and made it a social movement for freedom and equality of all people.⁴¹ Academically speaking, women's studies professionalised in this time and grew, making it more important for the academic field.⁴² This multiplicity of third-wave feminism in definition makes it difficult to easily describe the movement and the goal. It also shows that a social movement can be political and academic at the same time and have a different meaning for individuals.

Third-wave feminism and the Netherlands

Most of the literature so far has been focused on the context of the US, the UK and the academic debate. The focus will now shift to the Dutch context and academic debate on third-wave feminism. With the location of the Netherlands, Dutch feminists not only have a national position, but also transnational. The Netherlands is located in the middle of the Anglo-American feminist discourses that are dominant, and the European feminist traditions that are more minor.⁴³ Third-wave feminism is therefore unfolding in a different way. The third wave in the Netherlands does not go against the second or the first wave, but it critically reflects and reinterprets the ideas and builds upon new insights.⁴⁴ Dutch third-wave feminists mostly look at the future and how to shape the future in a way where sexual differences are no longer hierarchical and privileging men is no longer at the expense of women. The plans and ideas from first- and second-wave feminism in the Netherlands are the base for the agenda of third-wave feminists.⁴⁵

The trends in the research on third-wave feminism in the Dutch context mostly resolve around migrant women. Most of the available research on third-wave feminism or feminism between 1990 and 2005 in the Netherlands focuses on the involvement of feminist activists in

³⁹ Susan Archer Mann and Douglas J. Huffman, 'The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise of the Third Wave', *Science & Society* 69, no. 1 (2005): 57.

⁴⁰ Mann and Huffman, 'The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise of the Third Wave,' 80-81.

⁴¹ Mann and Huffman, 'The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise of the Third Wave,' 83.

⁴² Mann and Huffman, 'The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise of the Third Wave,' 84-85.

⁴³ Emmeline Besamusca and J. Verheul, eds., *Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 200.

⁴⁴ Besamusca and Verheul, *Discovering the Dutch*, 199-200.

⁴⁵ Besamusca and Verheul, *Discovering the Dutch*, 200-201.

efforts to promote the integration of migrant women and their struggle in equal treatment. Diversity and multiculturalism are important concepts during this time frame and help with the establishing of policies around gender in the Netherlands.⁴⁶ Taking a feminist perspective, there is a tension between gender equality and multiculturalism. Multiculturalism and respecting all cultures often conflict with gender equality and the liberal values of freedom. Equal right for cultural minorities can cause inequalities for women and decrease the rights for women, because patriarchal cultures sometimes subjugate women.⁴⁷ Growing critiques on the position of women in the acceptance of multiculturalism leads to a decrease in policies on multiculturalism in Europe.⁴⁸ This policy shift is seen in the Netherlands, where the integration process includes gender equality as one of the core values.⁴⁹

Migrant women were part of a minority group and the working class. Because of this, migrant women encountered challenges at intersecting and different levels of society. The patriarchal ideas in Dutch society and their own communities, discrimination on different fronts and Islamophobia were the biggest challenges these women had to deal with.⁵⁰ In the activist movement, Muslim women do engage, but on individual bases.⁵¹ Where the *Dolle Mina* and *Man Vrouw Maatschappij* were two big organisations active during the second feminist wave, during the third wave these organisations have disappeared. There was no big migrant movement or organisation where migrant women could join activism and protests.⁵² The organisations that did become active from the 1990s onwards were for the children of the migrants, who were born and raised in the Netherlands, and did not identify with their parents' country and culture. These organisations were more focused on the Islam and the identification of this group of migrant children to the Islam.⁵³

It is noteworthy that the Dutch academic literature is missing the term 'feminism.' When analysing the international debate, feminism is mentioned explicitly. In the Dutch literature, third-wave feminism is more defined as an 'emancipation movement' or 'women's emancipation movement.' Furthermore, it is interesting to see that patriarchal ideas gave rise

⁴⁶ Conny Roggeband and Mieke Verloo, 'Dutch Women Are Liberated, Migrant Women Are a Problem: The Evolution of Policy Frames on Gender and Migration in the Netherlands, 1995–2005', *Social Policy & Administration* 41, no. 3 (June 2007): 271, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9515.2007.00552.x>.

⁴⁷ Roggeband and Verloo, 'Dutch Women Are Liberated,' 271–272.

⁴⁸ Roggeband and Verloo, 'Dutch Women Are Liberated,' 272.

⁴⁹ Roggeband and Verloo, 'Dutch Women Are Liberated,' 272.

⁵⁰ Margaretha A. Van Es and Nella Van Den Brandt, 'Muslim Women's Activism and Organizations in the Netherlands and Belgium', *Trajecta. Religion, Culture and Society in the Low Countries* 29, no. 2 (1 December 2020): 193, <https://doi.org/10.5117/TRA2020.2.004.VANE>.

⁵¹ Van Es and Van Den Brandt, 'Muslim Women's Activism and Organizations,' 194.

⁵² Van Es and Van Den Brandt, 'Muslim Women's Activism and Organizations,' 194.

⁵³ Van Es and Van Den Brandt, 'Muslim Women's Activism and Organizations,' 204.

to the Dutch emancipation movement and that these ideas influenced the migrant women's movements. When comparing the Dutch debate with the international debate, the focus on policies in relation to the women's emancipation is noteworthy. In the international debate, the focus lies on the social and political side of the movement, but policies are not discussed. Interpreting these findings in the Dutch literature, it could be argued that white Dutch women were already equal and did not need a social movement to improve their rights. Migrant women may not see the need for a social movement; they come together for identification purposes. Furthermore, it could be stated that the mentions of the 'women's emancipation movement' show a different terminology in the Netherlands. The use of the definition 'women's emancipation movement' is not explicitly linked to third-wave feminism. Lastly, the massiveness of the organisations and protests of the second-wave feminism could have led to a decrease of social activism as the participants saw the rights increasing and felt more equal.

Museum studies and the relation to third-wave feminism

Before looking into the debate on third-wave feminism in relation to the museum, it is important to look at museum studies itself. There are three trends in the literature in museum studies. The first focuses on the definition of the museum. The ICOM has defined the institution of the museum, but theorists see the museum in multiple ways and disagree on these views. Some see the museum as 'a shrine', others as 'a market-drive industry', 'a colonizing space', or 'a post-museum'. These categories overlap for the theorists; the museum represents more than just one of these paradigms.⁵⁴ The second trend in museum studies is the history and the museum theory. Michel Foucault identified three systems in the formation and identity of institutions: Renaissance, classical, and modern.⁵⁵ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill argues that substantive change for museums can only come from acknowledging museum history as a series of ruptures. With this, she shows the relevance of the systems by Foucault in the history of museums.⁵⁶ Andrea Witcomb states that this notion by Foucault has limitations, the notion does not show the complexity of the institutions, and the institutions could not change in any way when following this notion by Foucault. Others state that the public is, in this

⁵⁴ Janet Marstine, ed., *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 8-9.

⁵⁵ Marstine, *New Museum Theory and Practice*, 21-22.

⁵⁶ Marstine, *New Museum Theory and Practice*, 22.

notion, a pawn manipulated by the institutions. The museum is in this case a state-controlled place, where popular culture could not be an influence.⁵⁷

Where some critics of Foucault state that museums can change, other critics state that museums cannot and will not change. The museum is, in this notion, introducing the new spaces, exhibitions and educational initiatives and opportunities, but they will always remain elitist institutions.⁵⁸ Theorists state that the art is presented outside of its context and fetishized by the museum, curator and public. When the museum does try to change, this is done in temporary exhibitions that do not change the museum itself.⁵⁹ The more optimistic theorists state that the museum can change. The 'private' museum is opening up more and the public can critically reflect on the museum and its practices now.⁶⁰ As Nick Prior argues, the museum is able to take on a more democratic space that is outside of the elite framework. Some curators want to share power and initiate the dialogue with the public to fully serve them.⁶¹

Museum studies also focus on social influences in the museum, one of these social influences is third-wave feminism. Scholars agree in the added value of feminist theory in museology. In the 1980s, female visual artists start to protest the art world and the shortage of art made by female visual artist in museums. With the help of female curators who are also feminists, art by female visual artists is represented more in museums.⁶² Museum leadership and museum policies are argued as vital in feminist museology and the equal representation of women in museums.⁶³ The debate is not only focused on the representation of art of female visual artists, it also has a focus on the way the female body is presented in art by male visual artists.⁶⁴

Following feminist theory in museums, it advocates for a shift from object-oriented exhibitions to the representation of practices and processes that vitalise societies. This includes fewer tangible elements, mostly conducted by the lower classes in society. Museums are more challenged in the exhibitions; the museums should not only collect the objects but also collaborate with the history.⁶⁵ Arndís Bergsdóttir proposes a post-human feminist

⁵⁷ Marstine, *New Museum Theory and Practice*, 22.

⁵⁸ Marstine, *New Museum Theory and Practice*, 25-26.

⁵⁹ Marstine, *New Museum Theory and Practice*, 26.

⁶⁰ Marstine, *New Museum Theory and Practice*, 27.

⁶¹ Marstine, *New Museum Theory and Practice*, 27.

⁶² Audrey M Clark, 'Museums, Feminism, and Social Impact' (n.d.), 88.

⁶³ Clark, 'Museums, Feminism, and Social Impact,' 89-90.

⁶⁴ Clark, 'Museums, Feminism, and Social Impact,' 90.

⁶⁵ Hilde Stern Hein, 'Redressing the Museum in Feminist Theory', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 22, no. 1 (March 2007): 39-40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647770701264846>.

museology in the museum studies. Post-human feminist museology focuses on opening the conversation that leads the way towards a feminist theorization. This feminist theorization can articulate the mutual relations between human and non-human units in museums, these entities focus on the collection, assembling and exhibition of cultural heritage.⁶⁶ Feminist theories can in this way expose hierarchal structures between the subject and the object.⁶⁷

In short, feminism and the third wave are debated in several studies. The focus in these studies differs, but the main topics are the activism and the terminology. The activism from the third wave is more subtle and moderate in comparison to the second wave. It is considered as more political and academic activism, instead of the social movement it was during the second wave. Terminology-wise, the third wave does not have one definition. The third wave is seen as a more individual movement, where third-wave feminism has a personal meaning to individuals. However, intersectionality and gender-based equality are core values of the third wave.

Following this international academic debate, it is important to examine the Dutch context in third-wave feminism. It becomes clear that the third wave played a different role in society in the Netherlands compared to second-wave feminism. Third-wave feminism builds upon the ideas of the second wave and reflects on these ideas. The activism of the second wave is not seen again in the third wave in the Netherlands; therefore, the third wave was less seen in society and less used as a term. The term 'third-wave feminism' or 'feminism' is not explicitly mentioned in the literature, and the focus is more on 'women's emancipation' and the migrant women's emancipation movement. Third-wave feminism in the Dutch context or literature is thus not considered as much as second-wave feminism or the writing on the third wave in an international context. The last part that is analysed is the context of the museums. Museum studies have focused on the definition and the possibility of changing the museum. Some see the museum as an elitist place that has no possibility to change. Others see the museum as a more democratic institution that has a dialogue with the public about the exhibitions and programming. When we connect third-wave feminism to the museum studies, we can argue that the research has mostly been object-oriented. The way women and the female body are portrayed and or the message of single art pieces are the focus points. The

⁶⁶ Arndís Bergsdóttir, 'Museums and Feminist Matters: Considerations of a Feminist Museology', *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 24, no. 2 (2 April 2016): 127, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2016.1182945>.

⁶⁷ Bergsdóttir, 'Museums and Feminist Matters,' 128.

value of feminist theories in museums is highlighted and demonstrated, but an actual application of feminist theory in museum studies is so far missing.

This thesis, on the one hand, fills a gap in the Dutch context and, on the other hand, in the museum context. In the Dutch context, third-wave feminism is discussed more frequently, and it represents an active movement among migrant women as they pursue their road to emancipation. By examining the movement itself and its influence on national policies, we can gain a better understanding of third-wave feminism's activism and the impact it has had. The missing gap in the museum context is the application of feminist theory and the analysis of exhibitions and policies that do not consider the portrayal of women or the female body. This thesis analyses the exhibitions, policies and goals of the museums and not at the art itself; therefore, this thesis sheds new light on third-wave feminism and the connection to the museums. With this thesis, not only a gap within the Dutch academic literature concerning third-wave feminism is filled, as well as a gap within the museum studies concerning third-wave feminism.

Sources

The sources that are used for this research consist of archival documents, interviews and the websites in Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Centraal Museum Utrecht and Museum Arnhem between 1990 and 2005. These three museums are chosen because of the position these museums have within the museum landscape in the Netherlands. With their municipal function, these museums operate in a different way than for example museums connected to an artist, like the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, and museums connected to a historical event, like a war museum. In addition, these museums are also chosen because of the inclusive and diverse approach they have nowadays. First, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is mentioned by other museums as a role model in inclusivity and diversity. Director Anne de Haij, who started in 2020 at Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, navigates a more diverse exhibition program where social inequality and intersectionality are addressed.⁶⁸ Centraal Museum Utrecht is chosen to be part of this comparison because of the central location in the Netherlands. The museum also focuses on the national and regional art and history as well as the international market.⁶⁹ Centraal Museum Utrecht is therefore multidimensional since it considers a broader context than just its own municipality when designing its programming. Lastly, Museum Arnhem tries to connect art to society, the city and the present. With different approaches, the museum tries to give different perspectives on society and art.⁷⁰ Liesbeth Brandt Cortesius was the director of Museum Arnhem between 1982 and 2000, she addressed the inequalities within the museum world and tried to present at least 50% of art and design made by women.⁷¹

In this thesis, three main types of sources are analysed: general documentation of the museum between 1990 and 2005, exhibitions by female visual artists between 1990 and 2005 and a short interview based on a survey for employees of the museums. The first set of sources, the general documentations of the museums between 1990 and 2005, consist of meeting notes and policies of the museum. The meeting notes provide additional information about the way of working within the museums and how certain decisions are made. These

⁶⁸ Zoë Spaaij, 'Anne de Haij wordt nieuwe directeur Stedelijk Museum Schiedam', de Volkskrant, 8 December 2020, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/cultuur-media/anne-de-haij-wordt-nieuwe-directeur-stedelijk-museum-schiedam~b625d030/>.

⁶⁹ Stichting Centraal Museum, 'Jaarrekening 2023', accessed 23-04-2025, https://www.centraalmuseum.nl/files/100583_Centraal%20Museum_controleverklaring%20jrk%202023_ondertekend.pdf.

⁷⁰ 'Over Ons | Museum Arnhem', accessed 25-01-2025, <https://www.museumarnhem.nl/nl/over-ons>.

⁷¹ 'Liesbeth Brandt Cortesius - Een Moedige Museumdirecteur - Is Overleden | Museum Arnhem', accessed 6 March 2025, <https://www.museumarnhem.nl/nl/nieuws/liesbeth-brandt-cortesius-een-moedige-museumdirecteur-is-overleden>.

meeting notes are also of meetings with the municipality; their influence is also examined. The policies of the museums focus more on the topics that come back in the exhibitions and the plans for the future of the museums. This combination of sources demonstrates the framework in which the museums operate and, in particular, the policies that determine what is exhibited in the museums. Even though this set of sources is not complete (there are years of meeting notes missing and some policies are not included in the archive) the combination of these two still gives a general understanding of the museums.

The second set of sources, the exhibitions, consist of the correspondence internally and with the artists, museums and galleries and the press releases of the exhibitions. These sets of sources show the considerations of the curators and other people working on the exhibitions. Additionally, the correspondence with the municipality on the loans or purchases of art for the exhibitions speak on further influence from the municipality. Besides that, the press releases show part of the motivation of the exhibitions. Nowadays, museums function as forum of discussion, this audience-centred role makes the museums also work with the public.⁷² The role of the curator is then to strengthen the connection with the community they serve and make new connections with other communities.⁷³ Curators and the museums are then more part of activism, rather than a political colour they are taking on, and should represent the concerns and interests of minority groups.⁷⁴ With this in mind, the exhibitions that the museums organise, reveal where the focus and interest of the museums and curators lies. However, these folders are not as complete as thought at first glance. The documentation on exhibitions misses the starting point, the brainstorming on the exhibitions, why this specific artist? And why now? Furthermore, the analysis on the exhibitions do not show how, for example, the public interprets the exhibition and how themes, like feminism, have taken space.

The last set of sources consists of one interview and two surveys, found in Appendix 1, filled in by people of the museums. For Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Anne de Haij, current director of the museum, is interviewed. Geertje Dekkers, curator of the city history at Centraal Museum, Utrecht, and Manon Braat, curator of contemporary art at Museum Arnhem, have filled in a survey that has the same questions that are asked in the interview. These interviews are helpful for a general understanding of the museums and their practices. The questions touched upon four central themes: the functioning of the museums, the societal themes in the

⁷² Thomas Cauvin, *Public History: A Textbook of Practice* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 81.

⁷³ Cauvin, *Public History*, 81.

⁷⁴ Cauvin, *Public History*, 83.

museums, the production process of the exhibitions and the influences from policies and funding. The answers give a deeper understanding of the museum in general, and new insight into the positionality of the museums and the influence from funders.

Methods

This thesis mainly focuses on the cultural performance theory as a method to analyse these museums. This analysis follows the methodological framework of Dorus Hoebink. The museum is, so to say, performing a social situation for the visitor through an exhibition and convincing the visitor of the museum's social situation. Analysing the exhibition itself, its portrayal, and the artist's identity is crucial in this cultural performance analysis. One can analyse the space the exhibition takes up in the museums (one room or only a small portion of the room or multiple rooms) and the motivation for this exhibition, as can be found in the press releases. All these factors combined indicate to what extent the museum values diversity in the exhibition.

The space the artist is given in the museums demonstrates the importance of this cultural performance in the museum. If an artist is given multiple rooms for their art only, it shows that the artist and the art are seen as important for the cultural performance of the museum. Besides that, the size of the exhibition also shows the importance of the artist or the art that is portrayed, it is an interaction between the museum and the artist with the art.⁷⁵ The exhibitions and policies will be analysed in what they mention and highlight, but also what they omit, as this gives insightful information. It is important to highlight both what is said and what is not said as this gives a deeper understanding. The museums will also be thoroughly analysed, by using the meeting notes and policies. Here, it is again valuable to look at what the museum is saying and what it is not saying. The mission and the goal of the museums are analysed and compared to the actual performance of the museums through their exhibitions. This is an important part of the analysis, because it shows how the museum is acting upon its policy and how they implement the policies and ideas in the exhibitions.

In addition to studying the performance of the museums, this thesis uses a qualitative analysis of policy documents and promotional material of exhibitions on female visual artists. This qualitative analysis focuses on the main ideas in the policies of the museums and what the museums report on diversity, inclusion and female representation in the museum. Furthermore, the promotional material of exhibitions on female visual artists is analysed to see if third-wave feminism or women's emancipation plays a role in the motivation. The meeting notes, the websites, and the interview and surveys the museums are placed in a contextual framework that gives a better understanding of the museums themselves and how they work. This combination of the sources and methods sheds new light on the research on

⁷⁵ Hoebink, 'Erfgoed Als Schouwspel', 16-17, 24-25.

museum studies in relation to third-wave feminism. Research has, up until now, mostly been object-oriented if it considered third-wave feminism in the museum context. The combination of sources makes for a new focus in the museum context, where it is more on policies and the motivation of exhibitions and less on the objects presented.

Contextualising the museum

Introduction

Museums have their own goals and topic that is central in exhibitions and the collection. For example, the Louvre in Paris, France, focusses on art from different centuries and different civilizations.⁷⁶ The New York History in New York, the United States, concentrates on the American history and expands to documents and artefacts too and not only art pieces.⁷⁷ Even though the topics, items, exhibitions differ, each of these institutions is called a *museum*. As mentioned before, the International Council of Museums provided a definition of the museum as an institution. Museums have been defined since 1796, and the definition has changed over the years. The first changes regard the art and the artists. Originally, a museum would function as a place of inspiration and learning, where the art would function as a source of inspiration.⁷⁸ After World War II, museums become more focused on the public. It should be a space where artistic, technical, scientific, historical and archaeological material is kept. There should also be a permanent exhibition room and all of it should be open to the public. Zoos and botanical gardens were also included in this, libraries on the other hand were explicitly excluded.⁷⁹ In the 1970s, museum professionals concluded that the world is constantly changing, and museums should take that into account. The time period for this research is 1990-2005 and the overlapping definition of a museum stems from 1974:

*‘A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of the society and its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment’.*⁸⁰

This chapter thoroughly analyses the concept of the museum. The sub question for this chapter is: Which broader trends can we observe within the external influences on museums in the Netherlands during the period 1990-2005? The first part of the analysis entails the history of the societal role of the museum and how its function has developed in more recent

⁷⁶ ‘Outreach and Transmission – Le Fonds de Dotation Du Louvre’, accessed 6-05-2025, <https://www.endowment.louvre.fr/presentation/ouverture-et-transmission/>.

⁷⁷ ‘About Us | The New York Historical’, accessed 6-5-2025, <https://www.nyhistory.org/about>.

⁷⁸ Martina Lehmannová, ‘224 Years of Defining the Museum’ (Czech Republic: International Council of Museums, 2020).

⁷⁹ Lehmannová, ‘224 Years of Defining the Museum’.

⁸⁰ Lehmannová, ‘224 Years of Defining the Museum’.

years. The next part of the analysis will focus on the operationalisation of the museum in the Netherlands and the influence from the (local) government. The governmental policies, advisory organs, funding, and the role of the municipality are studied to get a deeper understanding of the general operationalisation of the museum in the Netherlands.

The rise of the museum

The museum as an institution originated in the nineteenth century. The initial objective was to influence and educate the citizen-visitor but has since changed. This view and goal of the museum has changed since the nineteenth century.⁸¹ The first museums not only educated and influenced the visitor, but they also played a role in the identity politics and the development of nation-states. The power of the museum was used in the relation with the state and the heritage.⁸² In the 1980s a new museology arose that criticized the elitist approach of the museums and the function the museum had. This critique led to the shift towards a more audience-centred museum, the audience was included in the exhibitions and representation of the target audience is important.⁸³ Gail Anderson states that the dismantling of the museums as an ivory tower, where the visitor is part of an exclusive group, towards a more socially responsive and cultural institution is in service of the public. This is in line with what public historians have already been saying since the 1970s.⁸⁴ Not only public historians push for this more audience-based approach, but museum studies have also argued, from the 1980s onwards, that museums should have a more inclusive approach. This new approach should focus on the social role of the museum and encourage participation from the community.⁸⁵

One of the most important causes for this shift in the approach of the museums is globalisation. The world becomes more interwoven, and the museum visitor is therefore also more diverse. Museums have to fit in this more globalised framework and adapt to the changing world.⁸⁶ Besides globalisation influencing the museum, the museum is also decolonizing, which can be recognized on two levels; the power and focus of the museum. First, the *power* of the museum is reflected in the process of choosing, classifying and categorizing museum objects, which in turn also shows the ideology of the museum. The ideology of the museum is then seen in the exhibitions presented and the way the museum

⁸¹ Cauvin, *Public History*, 81.

⁸² Cauvin, *Public History*, 81.

⁸³ Cauvin, *Public History*, 81.

⁸⁴ Cauvin, *Public History*, 81.

⁸⁵ Deniz Ünsal, 'Positioning Museums Politically for Social Justice', *Museum Management and Curatorship* 34, no. 6 (2 November 2019): 596, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2019.1675983>.

⁸⁶ Ünsal, 'Positioning Museums Politically for Social Justice', 597.

describes what happened.⁸⁷ Second, the *focus* of the museum, which is also seen in the exhibitions. As many scholars have stated, a lot of museums are Western and Eurocentric. The decolonization of the museum would mean that one, the objects return to the place where it came from, and two, the focus shifts to a more global view. With this shift, museums would be better representations of society, art and the world in a whole.⁸⁸

Role of the government, province and municipality

Since 1992, the Dutch government, and especially the Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science), writes a four-year policy for the cultural sector. This cultural note includes the tasks of the ministry and cultural institutions and important developments from the past four years. Most importantly, the cultural note describes the cultural policy for the different institutions.⁸⁹ In the writing of this policy, the ministry is advised by the Raad voor Cultuur, a legal advisory council in the division of art, culture and media. The Raad gives advice on three levels. The first level is policy advice concerning current issues. The second level is advice on the allocation of four yearly state subsidies to cultural institutions, sectors and funds. The third and last level is advising the ministry on applications for a recognition as a professional institution for monumental conservation, or intangible heritage, like UNESCO, and on the European Heritage Label.⁹⁰ After the independent advice from the Raad is given, the ministry writes out the policy and decides on the allocation of subsidies.⁹¹

Besides the policy for the cultural sector, the ministry also subsidises the cultural sector through the culturele basisinfrastructuur (BIS, cultural basic infrastructure). Nowadays, twelve regional museums are part of this cultural basic infrastructure. This is a four yearly subsidy for cultural institutions, institutions for cultural development, and sector supporting institutions. The Raad voor Cultuur examines the subsidy applications based on five terms and advice the ministry in the subsidies to hand out. First, the institution is linked to the province where it is located. Second, the core activity of the museum should consist of the managing and preserving of the cultural heritage of the regional or provincial collection.

⁸⁷ Cauvin, *Public History*, 85.

⁸⁸ Cauvin, *Public History*, 85-86.

⁸⁹ d'Ancony, *Investeren in Cultuur : Nota Cultuurbeleid 1993-1996* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgeverij Plantijnstraat, 1992), 17.

⁹⁰ 'Raad voor Cultuur (RvC)', accessed 4-5-2025, https://www.parlement.com/id/vi57bl7he5wp/raad_voor_cultuur_rvc.

⁹¹ 'Raad voor Cultuur (RvC)'.

Third, the institution's collection is of importance in a national or international context. Fourth, the activities the museum wants subsidised are for the public and are linked to the collection. And fifth, the institution does not receive grants for the requested activities from other sources.⁹² Based on these five terms, the Raad recommends to the ministry on the amount of subsidy to grant an institution. This will be presented in the Tweede Kamer and discussed. The ministry later presents the four-year subsidy applications to the museums and the people.⁹³

The Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap does not only finance museums and other cultural institutions, but it also subsidises six funds that help artists in the cultural and creative sector. State culture funds, like the Mondriaan Fonds, are commissioned by the state. The funds should contribute to the artists, researchers, exhibition spaces, curators, galleries, clients and curators. The funds should stimulate the public to participate more in the cultural sector.⁹⁴ The Mondriaan Fonds, for example, focuses on the realisation of projects and activities from artists and curators.⁹⁵ Important factors for the funds are the variety, resilience, dialogue and relevance in the projects or activities. The projects and activities for which the subsidies are requested, have to vary from other activities and projects and have to be resilient to negative reactions. This resilience is important, because the activities ignite a dialogue between the artists, the institute and the public.⁹⁶ The Mondriaan Fonds is supporting artists that are outside of the norm and do not fit within the white, heterosexual, cisgender norms of society.⁹⁷

The national, provincial and municipal governments work together to realise an even distribution of cultural facilities across the country.⁹⁸ The province's central task is to realise the cultural distribution, regulation and maintenance in the province itself. The province can also help with subsidising exhibitions or cultural initiatives if they benefit the province.⁹⁹ The

⁹² Raad voor Cultuur, 'Culturele basisinfrastructuur 2025-2028', 2024.

⁹³ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 'Het culturele subsidiestelsel - Cultuursubsidie', webpagina (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 15 October 2019), <https://www.cultuursubsidie.nl/over-het-cultuurstelsel>.

⁹⁴ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 'Rijkscultuurfondsen - Het culturele subsidiestelsel - Cultuursubsidie', webpagina (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 28 October 2019), <https://www.cultuursubsidie.nl/over-het-cultuurstelsel/rijkscultuurfondsen>.

⁹⁵ 'Wie we zijn & wat we doen', Mondriaan Fonds, accessed 5-5-2025, <https://www.mondriaanfonds.nl/over-het-fonds/wie-we-zijn-en-wat-we-doen/>.

⁹⁶ 'Wie we zijn & wat we doen', Mondriaan Fonds.

⁹⁷ 'Wie we zijn & wat we doen', Mondriaan Fonds.

⁹⁸ Cas Smithuijsen, Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, and Boekmanstudies, *Cultuurbeleid in Nederland*, 1st ed. (Den Haag/Amsterdam: Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap/Boekmanstichting, 2007), 155.

⁹⁹ Smithuijsen et al., *Cultuurbeleid in Nederland*, 40.

municipality is responsible for the cultural institutions, like libraries and museums, and it subsidises a large part of these institutions.¹⁰⁰ As shown in Figure 1 below, the municipality (blue) is funding the most in the professional arts division ('Prof. kunsten'). More than 50% of the spendings on the arts is from the municipality, the relationship between the latter and the regional cultural sector is important.¹⁰¹ The province has a smaller share in the subsidising of the cultural sector, this is because of the task of the province as described above.

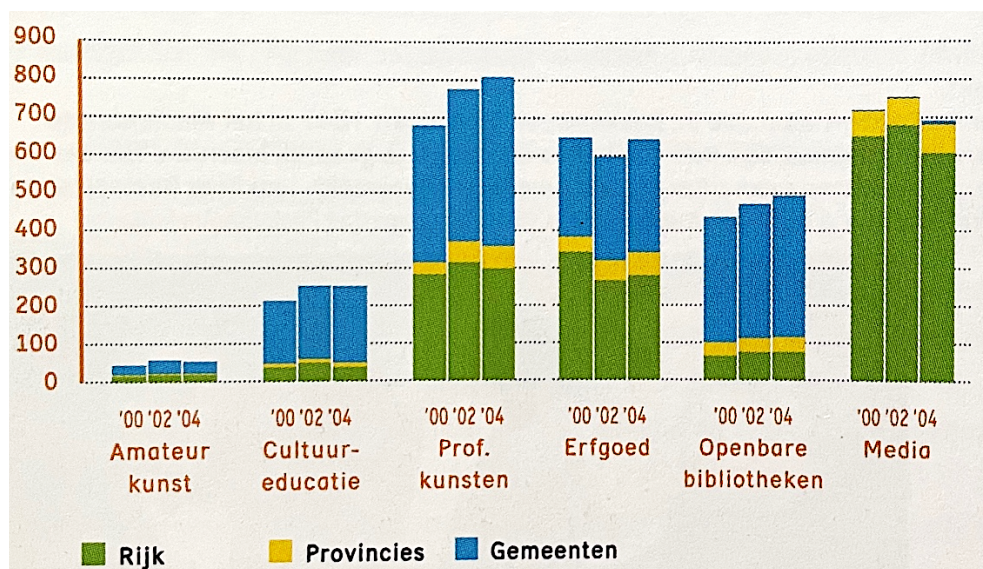


Figure 1: Net public spending on Culture and media by sector. In millions of euros in 2004 prices. Source: Cas Smithuijsen, Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, and Boekmanstudies, *Cultuurbeleid in Nederland*, 1st ed. (Den Haag/Amsterdam: Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap/Boekmanstichting, 2007), 48.

The subsidy from the municipality is not only always a permanent subsidy, it can also be occasional; this is then called the 'project subsidy'. The municipality determines itself the terms and conditions for the subsidy. For example, the municipality of Utrecht wants these projects to be innovative and special, and it should contribute to the city or the cultural sector in the city.¹⁰² These subsidies from the municipality can support the smaller initiatives from individuals or associations.¹⁰³ Different municipalities have these initiatives, the terms and amount of subsidy differs per municipality. In Utrecht, for example, the municipality can cover a maximum of 50% of the total costs, the other half should come for the organisation requesting the subsidy or other investors.¹⁰⁴ The museums covered in this research, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Centraal Museum Utrecht, and Museum Arnhem are currently included in the culturele basisinfrastructuur. However, in the time period 1990-2005, these museums

¹⁰⁰ Smithuijsen et al., *Cultuurbeleid in Nederland*, 40.

¹⁰¹ Smithuijsen et al., *Cultuurbeleid in Nederland*, 40.

¹⁰² 'Projectsubsidie cultuur aanvragen', Gemeente Utrecht, accessed 6-5-2025, <https://loket.digitaal.utrecht.nl/nl/products/projectsubsidie-cultuur-aanvragen>.

¹⁰³ 'Projectsubsidie cultuur aanvragen', Gemeente Utrecht.

¹⁰⁴ 'Projectsubsidie cultuur aanvragen', Gemeente Utrecht.

were funded by the municipality, other funds, and their own revenues. In the period 1990-2005, the government subsidised museums that had a national importance, like the Rijksmuseum. The regional museums were part of the municipality, and thus, the municipality subsidises these institutions.¹⁰⁵

Dutch cultural policies

The first national policy for the cultural sector is written in 1992 by Hedy d'Ancona, who led the ministry.¹⁰⁶ Before the Raad voor Cultuur was the advisory organ, there were the Raad voor de Kunst (Council for the Art) and the Raad voor het Cultuurbeheer (Council for the Cultural Management) separately, who advised the ministry.¹⁰⁷ The four-year policy that is published starts with a general plan for the whole cultural sector and later divides in the different cultural sectors and their specific policies. In the first policy, *Investeren in Cultuur, 1993-1996*, the consequences of globalisation for the cultural sector are discussed. Because of globalisation, the Dutch cultural heritage is lost. Therefore, the restoration of the Dutch cultural heritage is the central focus for these four years.¹⁰⁸ The ministry acknowledges the struggles of the cultural institutions, and according to the ministry, the restoration would help with the number of visitors and the financial problems.¹⁰⁹ The second element in the policy consists of bringing culture and society closer together. The cultural sector should represent the heterogeneous character of society.¹¹⁰ Cultural institutions also have to focus on variety and quality and differ from each other; this will ensure that everyone feels represented in the cultural sector.¹¹¹ The last element of the policy is the focus on the international market, as globalisation opened this up. The cultural sector should have a focus on the Eastern-European countries that were part of the Soviet Union, to widen and deepen the contacts with these countries. This closer connection should also help Eastern-European with their emancipation process.¹¹²

From the mid-nineties onwards, cultural diversity is mentioned more in cultural policies.¹¹³ In the cultural policy for 1997-2000, cultural diversity focuses on diversity in

¹⁰⁵ A Nuis, *Pantser of Ruggengraat : Cultuurnota 1997-2000* (Den Haag: Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, 1996), 93-97.

¹⁰⁶ d'Ancony, *Investeren in Cultuur*, 5-6.

¹⁰⁷ d'Ancony *Investeren in Cultuur*, 18.

¹⁰⁸ d'Ancony *Investeren in Cultuur*, 51.

¹⁰⁹ d'Ancony *Investeren in Cultuur*, 51.

¹¹⁰ d'Ancony *Investeren in Cultuur*, 51.

¹¹¹ d'Ancony *Investeren in Cultuur*, 51-53.

¹¹² d'Ancony *Investeren in Cultuur*, 133-134.

¹¹³ Smithuijsen et al., *Cultuurbeleid in Nederland*, 163.

ethnicity and including different ethnicities in the cultural sector.¹¹⁴ Besides cultural diversity, the city, Dutch youth, innovation and amateur artists should be highlighted more in the cultural sector.¹¹⁵ The museum, according to this policy, needs to have more structural changes. Social themes and cultural diversity should not only be seen in temporary exhibitions, but the collection and permanent exhibitions also have to change.¹¹⁶ Even though cultural diversity and changes in the collections are important in this policy, Dutch cultural heritage should also still be protected.¹¹⁷

In the policy for 2001-2004, there is a change in the definition of cultural diversity. ‘Cultural diversity’ was mostly used to describe cultural minorities and ethnic minorities, but in this policy the definition is broadened to the youth, women, and people outside of the Randstad. This broader definition of cultural diversity is however focused on the visitor.¹¹⁸ Nonetheless, the ministry is consulting the *Cultural Governance*, a special committee in the cultural landscape. This committee states that leadership positions and managements positions are mostly taken by white men. To become more diverse as a cultural institution, the employees should also be diverse, according to the committee. Cultural institutions should therefore create a more diverse profile for management positions, providing more positions for women and younger people.¹¹⁹ To increase the position of the museum in the cultural sector, the ministry wants the municipality and province to help with reaching a wider public. Museums should therefore host their cultural program in different locations, the municipality and province are supposed to help in this.¹²⁰ Cultural diversity is here again of importance, both diverse artists and diverse art.¹²¹

Conclusion

This contextualisation first showed the changes in the museum as an institution. The museum started as a place where artists were inspired. However, the museum evolved into a space where visitors actively participate and where society is represented. This shift comes from two processes: globalisation, which opened the world, and decolonisation, which opened the

¹¹⁴ Nuis, *Pantser of Ruggengraat*, 5.

¹¹⁵ Nuis, *Pantser of Ruggengraat*, 5.

¹¹⁶ Nuis, *Pantser of Ruggengraat*, 24.

¹¹⁷ Nuis, *Pantser of Ruggengraat*, 70.

¹¹⁸ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, *Cultuur Als Confrontatie : Cultuurnota 2001-2004* (Zoetermeer: Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, 2000), 40.

¹¹⁹ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, *Cultuur Als Confrontatie*, 41-42.

¹²⁰ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, *Cultuur Als Confrontatie*, 39.

¹²¹ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, *Cultuur Als Confrontatie*, 39.

museum. In the Netherlands, the role of the government and Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap is significant because it funds a portion of the cultural sector. The ministry is advised by the Raad voor Cultuur in this funding and the requirements for this funding. This is bundled in the four-year policy for the cultural sector. In this four-year policy, we can recognize a clear shift over time in the definition of cultural diversity. Initially, cultural diversity is focused on migrant communities and including this group in the cultural sector. The focus is later broadened to cultural diversity, where women, the youth and people outside of the Randstad are also included in the cultural sector. For the museums analysed in this research, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Centraal Museum Utrecht, and Museum Arnhem, the municipality is important, because of the regional character of the museums. The municipality generally follows the themes in the national policies when subsidising exhibitions and activities.

This also answers the key question in this chapter: Which broader trends can we observe within the influences from outside on museums in the Netherlands during the period 1990-2005? The ministry, Raad voor Cultuur and municipality are influencing the museums each in their own way. The ministry writes the policies and decides on the funding based on the recommendations by the Raad voor Cultuur. The local municipality then decides the core themes in the museums and the local funding it will get for activities and exhibitions.

Stedelijk Museum Schiedam

Introduction

The first museum to be analysed is Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, located in the city centre of Schiedam. In 2024, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam had around 65.000 visitors.¹²² The museum was founded in 1899 when head of the Dutch Civic guard, Visser, donated his historical art collection to the city of Schiedam, on the condition that the collection would be housed in a museum dedicated to the city. Stedelijk Museum Schiedam was hereby founded and housed the art of the collection of Visser in Saint Joris Doelen in Schiedam.¹²³ In 1940 the museum moved to its current location, the Saint Jacobs Guesthouse. This former nursing and retirement home was left vacant in 1934 after the residents moved to a newer and more comfortable home. Right before World War II, the museum moved into the building and started using the latter's right wing, where the women used to live, for its exhibitions. The building is characterised by the neo-classical style that was used by many architects in these years.¹²⁴ In the 1950s the municipality and the museum decided to shift the focus from the city's history to an art collection that presents more contemporary art and artists that are still alive. In the 1960s, the museum expanded, opening the old male wing for exhibitions and almost doubling the museum in size.¹²⁵ Nowadays the museum hosts exhibitions in both the wings, as well as the attic and the basement of the building. The entrance hall is used as a café and has a small shop.¹²⁶

Stedelijk Museum Schiedam describes itself as 'a museum for art, history and a lot of people'.¹²⁷ As highlighted on its website, the museum develops activities that aim to incorporate five core values: proximity to the people of Schiedam, innovation, highlighting both young and culturally diverse artists and publics, highlighting artists and the public in Schiedam itself, and the museum breeds understanding.¹²⁸ Besides these core values, the museum strives to promote accessibility concerning the exhibited art, the city's history and Schiedam's current inhabitants.¹²⁹ This can be seen in the exhibitions the museum has organized on minority and other groups, for example concerning women and the queer

¹²² Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Jaarverslag 2024' (Schiedam, March 2025).

¹²³ 'Wat zijn we?', *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog), accessed 03-04-2025, <https://stedelijkmuseumschiedam.nl/over-het-museum/wat-zijn-we/>.

¹²⁴ 'Over het museum', *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog), accessed 22-01-2025, <https://stedelijkmuseumschiedam.nl/over-het-museum/>.

¹²⁵ 'Wat zijn we?', *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog).

¹²⁶ 'Wat zijn we?', *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog).

¹²⁷ 'Over het museum', *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog).

¹²⁸ 'Wat doen we?', *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog), accessed 22-01-2025, <https://stedelijkmuseumschiedam.nl/over-het-museum/wat-doen-we/>.

¹²⁹ 'Wat doen we?', *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog).

community, as well as the permanent ‘panorama’ exhibition that highlights the city’s history. The panorama is an exhibition that highlights the city’s history in a recognisable manner, and it connects the Dutch Canon, an initiative that provides information about the history of the Netherlands that is taught in schools, to Schiedam.¹³⁰ Another example of the diversity and accessibility in the museum is the exhibition ‘Women of Schiedam’, which was set up on the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the city.¹³¹ The exhibition focusses on women in both the past and present who had a big influence on the city. This exhibition explicitly foregrounds the women of Schiedam and their stories.¹³²

In this first empirical chapter, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is thoroughly analysed. The central sub question in this chapter is: Which broader societal messages did Stedelijk Museum Schiedam integrate in its exhibitions on female visual artists during the period 1990-2005 in the Netherlands? To answer this question, I first analyse documents related to the inner workings of the museum during this period, such as policy documents and meeting notes. These documents enable me to identify the overall positionality of the museum in light on an intersectional analytical lens. In a second step, I then provide an overview of the exhibitions that were hosted by Stedelijk Museum Schiedam during this period. Following this overview, I analyse how female visual artists were represented in these exhibitions. The last step in this analysis of Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is to I investigate the museum’s involvement in the women’s emancipation movement in Schiedam.

Positionality of Stedelijk Museum Schiedam in the policies

Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is commissioned by the municipality, together, the decision on themes and exhibitions are made. The local politics and national politics are therefore also playing a big role in the exhibition policy and program. The municipality, together with other institutions, funds, and companies, sponsor the exhibitions in the museums.¹³³ The museum itself also uses its own revenues for the exhibitions and educational projects, because it is declared a non-profit foundation. This also means that the museum does not have to pay gift or inheritance taxes, and the museum is not allowed to make profit with its practices.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ ‘Panorama Schiedam’, *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog), accessed 08-042025, <https://stedelijkmuseumschiedam.nl/tentoonstelling/panorama-schiedam/>.

¹³¹ ‘Vrouwen van Schiedam’, *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog), accessed 08-04-2025, <https://stedelijkmuseumschiedam.nl/tentoonstelling/vrouwen-van-schiedam/>.

¹³² ‘Vrouwen van Schiedam’, *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog).

¹³³ Anne de Haij (director Stedelijk Museum Schiedam), interviewed by Chris Klarenbeek, 10 April 2025.

¹³⁴ ‘Wat doen we?’, *Stedelijk Museum Schiedam* (blog).

The analysis of the museum starts with an analysis of the policies of the museum between 1990 and 2005. The first policy in the archive is a proposed policy plan for 1993 with notes, it focusses on the museum and its functioning with a declining number of visitors.¹³⁵ This struggle is also seen in the meeting notes with the municipality. Together they discuss different possible solutions; a higher entrance fee and more activities for the public are discussed the most in order to increase the visitors.¹³⁶ In addition to the decrease in visitors, the building is also in need of a renovation. The museum and municipality are trying to see where the money for the renovation can come from.¹³⁷ For the period 1991-1995 the municipality is willing to increase the budget for Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, this also includes the budget for the purchases of new art.¹³⁸ The policy of 1993 is therefore also focussing on improving the museum and attracting more visitors. The main goal for the museum is thus delivering high quality exhibitions.¹³⁹ Because of the financial situation, the main focus of the museum is attracting more visitors and putting itself on the map in the museum landscape.¹⁴⁰ The performance of the museum is therefore focused on high quality exhibitions; staying close to the local public is therefore an important element. Besides the local public, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is also presenting more artists who are part of the Cobra movement. This was a movement of young and pioneering artists who focus on spontaneous and colourful art.¹⁴¹ Additionally, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is also emphasising the local history in their exhibitions to attract the people living in Schiedam and the surrounding areas.¹⁴²

Four years later, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam discusses an exhibition policy for the period 1997-2001. The main goal of the museum has shifted from high quality exhibitions to:

‘Stedelijk Museum Schiedam collects and manages objects of art- and cultural historical importance that are representative for the history and development of the Dutch

¹³⁵ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘1993’, 184-185 Beleidsnota’s Voor Het Museum, 1982, 1993 1 Omslag (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

¹³⁶ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘1991-1998’, 187-189 Notulen van Het Overleg van de Directie Met de Wethouder En de Secretariaat afdeling Voor Cultuur, Zng. ‘Driehoeksoverleg Cultuur-Museum’, 1986-2005 3 Omslagen (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

¹³⁷ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘1999-2005’, 187-189 Notulen van Het Overleg van de Directie Met de Wethouder En de Secretariaat afdeling Voor Cultuur, Zng. ‘Driehoeksoverleg Cultuur-Museum’, 1986-2005 3 Omslagen (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

¹³⁸ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘1991-1998’.

¹³⁹ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘1993’.

¹⁴⁰ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘1993’.

¹⁴¹ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘1993’.

¹⁴² Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘1993’.

contemporary art from the mid twentieth century and, respectively, for the history of the city Schiedam'.¹⁴³

Stedelijk Museum Schiedam focuses with this goal on the contemporary art movement and the history of Schiedam in their exhibitions. An explicit focus on minority groups or women is not mentioned. However, in the meeting notes with the municipality, the museum is discussing the diversity among the population of Schiedam.¹⁴⁴ By also focusing on the history of Schiedam and the relevance to Schiedam in the exhibitions, the museum would be also representing this diverse character of the city. Stedelijk Museum Schiedam strives to exhibit Sherrie Levine. However, the museum has waited too long in booking the exhibition and therefore this exhibition does not go through.¹⁴⁵ Levine re-photographs images taken by male photographers, she questions with this the authority of the maker and the role of women in the art history. Sherrie Levine's approach is contributing to the debate on gender and representation, and it is seen as part of feminist art and the feminist discourse.¹⁴⁶ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam wanting to present Sherrie Levine and her art, shows that the museum wants to share her message. In the discussion on the exhibition on Sherrie Levine, 'third-wave feminism' or 'women's emancipation' is not mentioned.¹⁴⁷ However, the museum wanting to present Sherrie Levine does show the importance for the museum to share these messages with the visitor.

The second and last exhibition policy for the analysis of Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is the policy of 2001-2005, called 'The equality of the disparate'.¹⁴⁸ The museum puts differentiation and variety central in the museum and the practices. The museum wants to stand out more and distinguish itself more from other museums in the Netherlands. Stedelijk Museum Schiedam states that the visit of an exhibition should bring an emotional experience. Diana Wind wants the visitor to 'have fun, think, become greedy, doubt and to be misled'.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Voor de Periode 1997-2001', 434-436 Nota's Betreffende Het Tentoonstellingsbeleid, 1996-2006 3 Omslagen (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

¹⁴⁴ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, '1991-1998'.

¹⁴⁵ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, '1991-1998'.

¹⁴⁶ 'The Feminism of Sherrie Levine through the Prism of the Supposed "Death of the Author"', *AWARE Women Artists / Femmes Artistes* (blog), accessed 5 June 2025, <https://awarewomenartists.com/en/magazine/feminisme-de-sherrie-levine-prisme-de-pretendue-mort-de-lauteur/>.

¹⁴⁷ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Voor de Periode 1997-2001'.

¹⁴⁸ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Voor de Periode 2001-2005', 434-436 Nota's Betreffende Het Tentoonstellingsbeleid, 1996-2006 3 Omslagen (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

¹⁴⁹ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Voor de Periode 2001-2005'.

The visitor should experience so many emotions, that they leave the museum ‘dizzy with emotions’.¹⁵⁰ Director Diana Wind is also more critical of the white heterosexual man as an artist. In the policy document, she for example states the following:

‘And this, by the way, apart from the fact that the list [of renowned artists] again features almost exclusively heterosexual white men: apparently only this population group makes art that we, white art snobs with our objective criteria, consider of high quality.’¹⁵¹

This quote has a few implications. First, the museum is aware of the male dominance in the art world and the way society looks at art and finds certain art of ‘high quality’. Second, the museum believes that this view on ‘high quality art’ should change and the ‘white, heterosexual man as an artist’ is not necessarily a producer of ‘high quality art’. By pointing out these systems that are in place, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is taking steps towards a more inclusive policy and exhibition program. The question then remains if the exhibition program and exhibitions are more inclusive and if they do go against the male dominance in the art world.¹⁵²

Exhibitions

A second important part of the analysis of Stedelijk Museum Schiedam are its exhibitions during the period 1990-2005. In the archive, the documentation on the exhibitions is diverse. The majority of the folders consist of the correspondence with the artist, other museums and galleries on loans of art pieces, internal communication about the exhibition, press statements and other material for the marketing and sometimes even reviews of the exhibition in Stedelijk Museum Schiedam. Between 1990 and 2005, 67 artists are presented in the exhibitions of the museums. What stands out is the distribution of male and female visual artists in this. Not even 1/3 of the highlighted artists in exhibitions were female.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘Voor de Periode 2001-2005’.

¹⁵¹ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘Voor de Periode 2001-2005’.

¹⁵² Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘Voor de Periode 2001-2005’.

¹⁵³ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘Stukken Betreffende de Tentoonstelingsprogramma’s Voor de Periode, 1989-2004 1 Pak’ (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

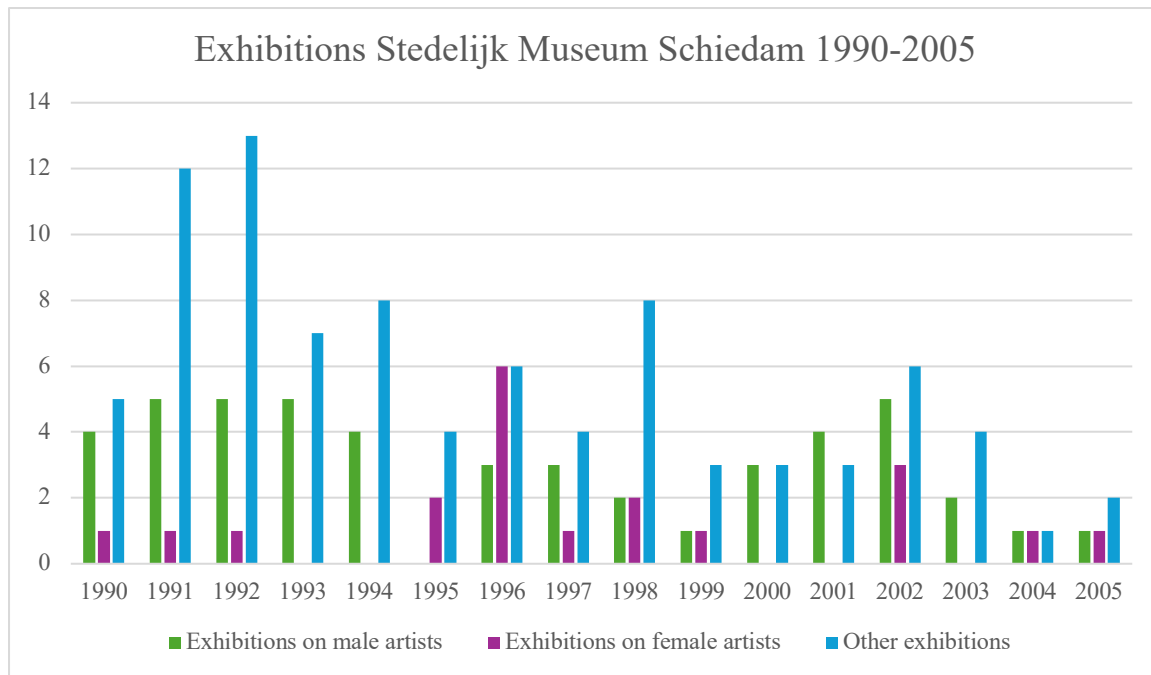


Figure 2: Exhibitions Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 1990-2005. Source: Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Stukken Betreffende de Tentoonstellingsprogramma's Voor de Periode, 1989-2004 1 Pak' (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

In the Figure 2, the category 'other exhibitions' is the biggest. This category consists of all the exhibitions that are presenting the city's history or are not linked to specific artists. Interesting in this graph, almost every year the exhibition program is dominated by male visual artists. 1995 and 1996 are here an exception, where female visual artists were represented more, and the years 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2005 exhibited the same number of female and male visual artists.¹⁵⁴ The high number of exhibitions on the category 'other exhibitions' in the 1990s, can be traced back to the policies, where high quality art and exhibitions linked to the city are important.¹⁵⁵ Interestingly, in 2001, when the bias and inequality in the art world are acknowledged in the policy, the number of exhibitions on female visual artists is zero. In the years after, it is shown that the program is not presenting more female visual artists than before. The museum is here performing a message of change in the policy, but in the exhibitions, this is not seen.

Even though the archive of Stedelijk Museum Schiedam has an extensive collection, not all the exhibitions that have been hosted are included. Only six exhibitions on female visual artists are found in the archive, four will be analysed here. The first exhibition that is found in the archive is of Juul Kraijer in 1998. The exhibition on Juul Kraijer is part of the

¹⁵⁴ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Stukken Betreffende de Tentoonstellingsprogramma's Voor de Periode, 1989-2004 1 Pak'.

¹⁵⁵ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, '1993'; Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Voor de Periode 1997-2001'.

‘Unisono’ series, where contemporary artists get a space in the museum to present the recent developments in their art. Not only is this exhibition the first solo exhibition for Kraijer, but she also received the ‘Charlotte Köhler Prijs’ in 1998.¹⁵⁶ This price is awarded to young, promising artists below thirty-five and with either a Dutch nationality or they have to live in the Netherlands for at least three years.¹⁵⁷ In the press release, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam describes the art of Juul Kraijer as followed:

*‘The exhibition features a large number of drawings. Drawings of ‘lady girls’, elegant, introverted, watchful and aware of their budding beauty. Juul Kraijer draws a recurring woman, whose hair is often an important element’.*¹⁵⁸

The female body is thus central in the work of Kraijer. With her recent award and promising developments, an exhibition of Kraijer fits within the Unisono series of the museum. This also fits within the exhibition policy of this period, that states the importance of exhibiting developments within the Dutch contemporary art world.¹⁵⁹

The second exhibition analysed is the exhibition by Ansuya Blom in 1998 and 1999. For this exhibition, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is, together with Stuart Morgan, releasing a catalogue about Ansuya Blom and her art. Curator of modern art at Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Ludo van Halem, wrote the foreword, in Figure 3, for this catalogue. Van Halem describes the art as multidimensional, the catalogue functions as an extension of the human senses in the understanding of the art.¹⁶⁰ The catalogue, together with the exhibition taking place in two exhibition rooms and the attention of the press, shows that Stedelijk Museum Schiedam finds this exhibition and the art important.¹⁶¹ Relating this back to the policy of

¹⁵⁶ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “‘Juul Kraijer’, 1998’, 313-430 Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Tentoonstellingen, 1985-2009 118 Pakken (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Cultuurfonds Talentprijs Charlotte Köhler - het Cultuurfonds’, accessed 25 May 2025, <https://www.cultuurfonds.nl/cultuurfonds-talentprijs-charlotte-köhler>.

¹⁵⁸ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “‘Juul Kraijer’, 1998’.

¹⁵⁹ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, ‘Voor de Periode 1997-2001’.

¹⁶⁰ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “‘Ansuya Blom’ III, 1998-1999’, 313-430 Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Tentoonstellingen, 1985-2009 118 Pakken (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

¹⁶¹ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “‘Ansuya Blom’ I, 1998-1999’, 313-430 Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Tentoonstellingen, 1985-2009 118 Pakken (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam; Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “‘Ansuya Blom’ II, 1998-1999’, 313-430 Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Tentoonstellingen, 1985-2009 118 Pakken (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam; Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “‘Ansuya Blom’ III, 1998-1999’.

1997-2001, Ansuya Blom is playing a significant role in the Dutch art world. Blom being a female visual artist seems not to play a role in the decision making for the museum.

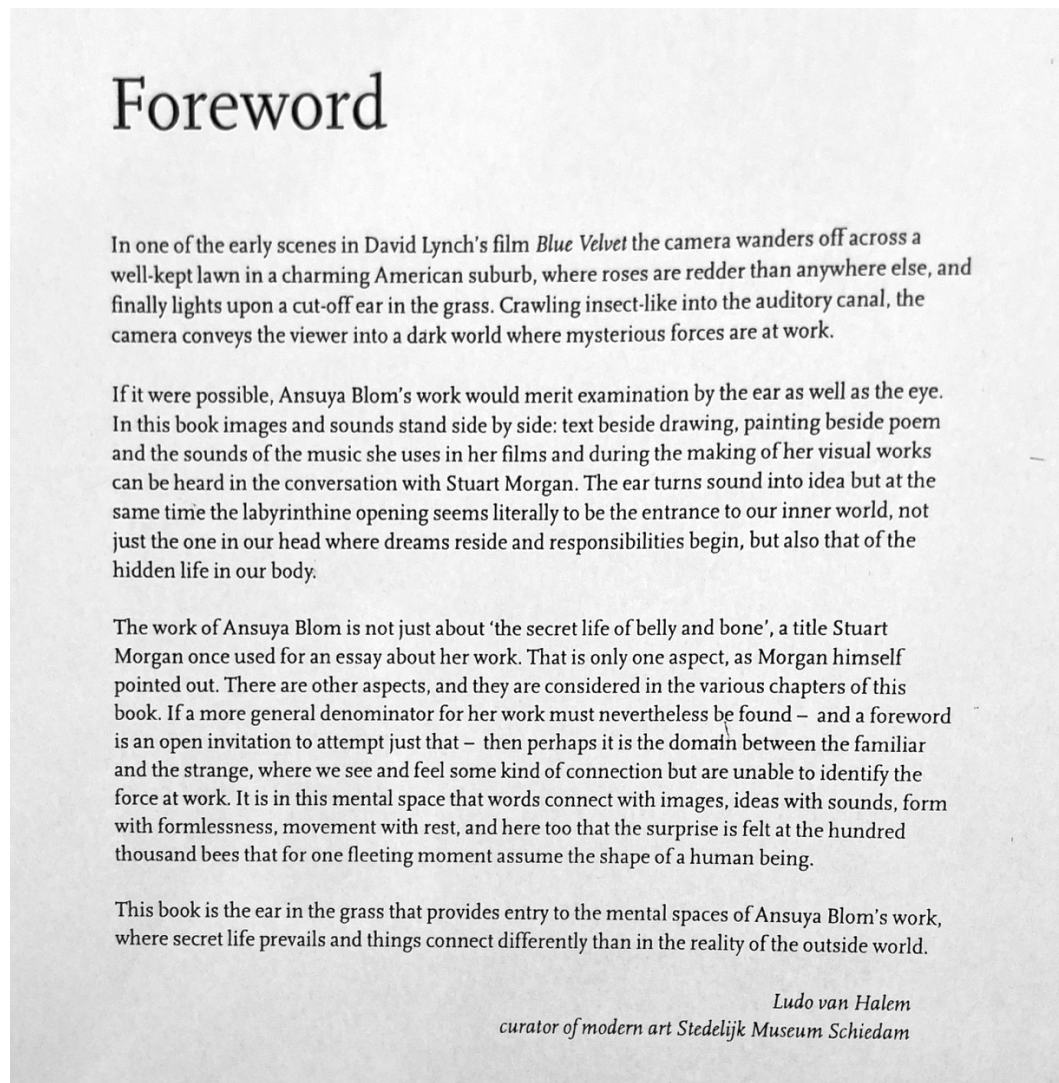


Figure 3: Foreword of Ansuya Blom "Let me see, if this be real". Source: Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, "Ansuya Blom" III, 1998-1999; 313-430 Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Tentoonstellingen, 1985-2009 118 Pakken (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

Karin Arink in 2002 is the third exhibition analysed in this chapter. Since 2000, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is hosting smaller temporary exhibitions and projects in the stairwells of the museum, Karin Arink is one of these projects. The museum challenges the artist with the complexity of the space and the artists have to be inspired by the space.¹⁶² There are already art pieces by Arink in the collection of the museum Karin Arink uses three states of being in her exhibition: alone (I), together (I+I), and with a child (I+I+I). These three

¹⁶² Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, "Karin Arink", 2002; 313-430 Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Tentoonstellingen, 1985-2009 118 Pakken (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

states of being are exhibited in three different stairwells.¹⁶³ Every year, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam decides on a theme for this project exhibition, in 2002 the theme is as followed:

*‘This year, artists have been chosen that are located with their art on the interface of sculpture/ (the use of) performance/fashion design where the own identity is taken as the premise’.*¹⁶⁴

The museum thus wants to challenge the artists, not only with the space for the exhibition, but also with a theme that is central in the exhibitions. After further analysis of the exhibition and press release, the characteristics of the art by Arink seem to be the reason for the exhibition. Arink is fascinated with the relation between the individual and the other and its surroundings, where each state of being discovers a new level.¹⁶⁵ Connecting the exhibition to the policy, Karin Arink and her art evoke emotional reactions with the visitor and the visitor will leave the museum thinking about the individual.¹⁶⁶

The last exhibition analysed for Stedelijk museum Schiedam is the ‘Unisono in Duplo’ by Jurriaan Molenaar and Karin van Dam in 2005. The Unisono series is now highlighting two artists instead of one. Stedelijk Museum Schiedam decided this because of the fascination with (urban) spaces and architecture for both artists. They both use this in opposite ways, Molenaar stays mostly two-dimensional and with mathematical approaches, where Van Dam works three-dimensional with organic shapes and installations that look like labyrinths.¹⁶⁷ Interestingly, Molenaar is named first in the press release and the exhibition title, but in the extended description that comes with the press statement Karin van Dam is mentioned first. Stedelijk Museum Schiedam does not have one order in the naming of these two artists.¹⁶⁸ This could point to the awareness of the museum of the male domination in the art world. The installation of Karin van Dam is presented in De Korenbeurs, this is an external location with a large atrium where the installation will fit. For the fifteen paintings by Jurriaan Molenaar it is however unclear if these are also located in the atrium or in Stedelijk Museum Schiedam.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “Karin Arink”, 2002’.

¹⁶⁴ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “Karin Arink”, 2002’.

¹⁶⁵ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “Karin Arink”, 2002’.

¹⁶⁶ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “Karin Arink”, 2002’.

¹⁶⁷ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “Unisono in Duplo; Jurriaan Molenaar En Karin van Dam”, 2005’, 313-430
Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Tentoonstellingen, 1985-2009 118 Pakken (Schiedam, n.d.), 540
Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

¹⁶⁸ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “Unisono in Duplo; Jurriaan Molenaar En Karin van Dam”, 2005’.

¹⁶⁹ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, “Unisono in Duplo; Jurriaan Molenaar En Karin van Dam”, 2005’.

Participation women's emancipation movement Schiedam

Between 1992 and 2001, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam participated in a women's emancipation movement in Schiedam. This movement was led by a committee assigned by the municipality and part of its diversity policy. The goal of this movement is to redistribute the power, to make men and women equal, to better the emancipation policy and to bring the women of Schiedam closer to the city council.¹⁷⁰ The premise of this organisation is to make a name, to be accessible, reach the goals and work on publicity. The organisation keeps a close eye on the policy of the municipality and assess these policies and the effects they have on the position of women.¹⁷¹ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam helps the committee in the organisation of International Women's Day in Schiedam, which has a new theme every year. In the meeting notes, there is a clear struggle between the different organisations in deciding the theme for every year.¹⁷² The committee is clearly struggling with the intersectionality of the women's emancipation movement and therefore have to decide on a theme that is broad and representative for the women's emancipation movement.¹⁷³ Besides hosting International Women's Day in Schiedam, the committee also focuses on structural changes in organisations. Diana Wind, director of Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, asks in a local newspaper why we distinguish men and women. She states that leadership positions can also be filled by women, as long as they are qualified for the job. A politically active character and caring for people is more important for Wind than being male or female.¹⁷⁴ Besides that, Wind argues that the work of the mayor and aldermen would not change if there were more women in those positions.¹⁷⁵

Diana Wind is positioning herself more in the management changes and political side of activism. This could mean that she thinks that these structural changes are more important than or the start of a social movement. Another interpretation could be that Wind wants to change the museum too, but the advisory board is disagreeing with her ideas. The latter could also be seen in the policy of 2001-2005, where the bias and male dominance is acknowledged,

¹⁷⁰ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Stukken Betreffende de Deelname Aan de Stichting Schiedamse Vrouwenemancipatie-Organisatie, 1992-2001 1 Omslag' (Schiedam, n.d.), 540 Archief van het Stedelijk Museum, Gemeentearchief Schiedam.

¹⁷¹ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Stukken Betreffende de Deelname Aan de Stichting Schiedamse Vrouwenemancipatie-Organisatie, 1992-2001 1 Omslag'.

¹⁷² Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Stukken Betreffende de Deelname Aan de Stichting Schiedamse Vrouwenemancipatie-Organisatie, 1992-2001 1 Omslag'.

¹⁷³ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Stukken Betreffende de Deelname Aan de Stichting Schiedamse Vrouwenemancipatie-Organisatie, 1992-2001 1 Omslag'.

¹⁷⁴ 'Diana Wind: "Het Gaat Om Kwaliteit"', *Het Nieuwe Stadsblad*, 24 December 1997.

¹⁷⁵ 'Diana Wind: "Het Gaat Om Kwaliteit"', *Het Nieuwe Stadsblad*.

but actual changes are not seen.¹⁷⁶ It is also worth mentioning that the museum and Diana Wind are not explicitly stating that there should be more women in management or leadership positions. Following Wind, quality is the most important and gender should then not matter in the decision between a man and a woman.¹⁷⁷

Conclusion

In this first chapter, I first provided an overview of Stedelijk Museum Schiedam and the history of the museum. Over the years, the museum grew to be a museum for the people where art and history come together. The museum exhibits contemporary art from the mid-twentieth century alongside exhibitions about the city and its history. Next, I conducted an analysis of the policy of 1993 and two exhibition policies covering the periods 1997-2001 and 2001-2005. There is a clear trend in the central task description of the museum, in the beginning the focus is solely on high quality exhibitions. This evolves into exhibitions with cultural historical significance and relevance to Dutch contemporary visual art and Schiedam. In 2001, the policy focused on evoking emotions among the visitors with exhibitions. In this policy, there is a growing awareness of the male dominance in the art world and the bias that exists among museum visitors. After the analysis of the policies, the exhibition program and exhibitions were analysed. Gender does not seem to play a role in the decision-making on exhibitions, especially considering that the number of exhibitions on female visual artists is lower in the years 2000-2005, than in the years 1990-1999. Finally, the participation in the women's emancipation movement in Schiedam is analysed. This movement, and Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, is more focused on changing the structures in institutions and the municipality. It is therefore also less of a social movement and more political.

From the perspective of third-wave feminism intersectionality, this analysis demonstrates how Stedelijk Museum Schiedam does not specifically focus on gender when making decisions on exhibitions. Diana Wind however is actively participating in the women's emancipation movement of Schiedam on a political front. In organizing the exhibitions, the policies are leading in the themes and the results the exhibitions have on the visitor. This also links the cultural performance to the museum. Stedelijk Museum Schiedam and its performance for the visitor follows its policy where gender and feminism are not prioritised. The last policy describes the visitor's reaction, but the policy does not mention

¹⁷⁶ Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Voor de Periode 2001-2005'.

¹⁷⁷ 'Diana Wind: "Het Gaat Om Kwaliteit"', *Het Nieuwe Stadsblad*.

any social situations to highlight in the exhibitions. This also answers the central question for this empirical chapter: which broader societal messages did Stedelijk Museum Schiedam integrate in their exhibitions on female visual artists during the period 1990-2005 in the Netherlands? Stedelijk Museum Schiedam is integrating the societal messages of the artists in their exhibitions, but feminism or women's emancipation is not one of them.

Centraal Museum Utrecht

Introduction

Centraal Museum Utrecht is located in the middle of the museum quarter of Utrecht and in 2023 the museum had around 93.000 visitors.¹⁷⁸ The museum was founded in 1838, making it the oldest city museum in the Netherlands. Centraal Museum Utrecht focuses on art, the city's history and fashion. The biggest part of the collection belongs to the municipality of Utrecht.¹⁷⁹ The museum manages a large collection with art from different time periods.¹⁸⁰ From 1921 onwards, the museum is located in the Agnietenklooster. This building, with stables for horses attached to it, was formerly used as a monastery. Today, both the monastery and the stables are used for exhibitions.¹⁸¹ The museum was first called Stedelijk Museum van Oudheden (City Museum of Ancient Times), but in 1916 it was renamed to Centraal Museum Utrecht. This name stems from the central location in the Netherlands and because the museum holds different collections that come together in one central place.¹⁸²

The museum has three main objectives. First, it manages Centraal Museum Utrecht, the monumental museum complex on the Agnietenstraat/Nicolaaskerkhof in Utrecht, the Miffy Museum and the Rietveld Schröderhuis. These museums are all part of the Stichting Centraal Museum.¹⁸³ Second, Centraal Museum Utrecht preserves, manages, expands and improves the exhibitions and the collection that is loaned to the museum.¹⁸⁴ Third, it controls other tasks that are related to the museum and improve the museum and its branding.¹⁸⁵ Centraal Museum Utrecht also follows the Governance Code Culture, which offers museums and cultural institutions a framework for supervision and governance of a museum or cultural institution.¹⁸⁶ The Code consists of eight different principles, the museum highlights each of the principles in their annual accounts of 2023. The first principle of this Code is to realise

¹⁷⁸ Stichting Centraal Museum, 'Jaarrekening 2023', accessed 23-04-2025, https://www.centraalmuseum.nl/files/100583_Centraal%20Museum_controleverklaring%20jrk%202023_ondertekend.pdf

¹⁷⁹ 'Bezoek het Centraal Museum | Ontdek Utrecht, de gids voor Utrecht', accessed 23-04-2025, <https://www.ontdek-utrecht.nl/locatie/centraal-museum/>.

¹⁸⁰ 'Bezoek het Centraal Museum | Ontdek Utrecht, de gids voor Utrecht'.

¹⁸¹ '100 jaar Centraal Museum', Oud Utrecht, 28 December 2021, <https://oud-utrecht.nl/nieuws/983-100-jaar-centraal-museum>.

¹⁸² '100 jaar Centraal Museum', Oud Utrecht.

¹⁸³ Centraal Museum, 'Anbi-Status Stichting Centraal Museum', accessed 23-04-2025, <https://www.centraalmuseum.nl/files/ANBI-Status%20Stichting%20Centraal%20Museum.pdf>.

¹⁸⁴ Stichting Centraal Museum, 'Anbi-Status Stichting Centraal Museum'.

¹⁸⁵ Stichting Centraal Museum, 'Anbi-Status Stichting Centraal Museum'.

¹⁸⁶ 'Governance Code Cultuur - Cultuur+Ondernemen', accessed 23-04-2025, https://www.cultuur-ondernemen.nl/governance-code-cultuur?gad_source=1&gbraid=0AAAAADimbebvZFDeNMhGegy8Ra2k5alNU&gclid=CjwKCAjwn6LABhBS EiwAsNjrjyHqct_uGPnJdEsA7ixOeRjdrbGH3uUtpDXLvaXQAWySQpQ9v82pBoCz7gQAvD_BwE.

social impact. The museum aims to broaden the view of the public. The city Utrecht is the basis, and the world is the playing field. As highlighted in one of the museum's recent yearly financial reports, the exhibition program aims to highlight societal themes, without compromising the artistic ambitions of the museum.¹⁸⁷ Centraal Museum Utrecht describes itself as the museum of art of the city with national and international ambitions and as a place where in-depth stories can be told about the city's history. The museum thus wants to represent all the citizens in Utrecht and other people that visit the museum. Inside and outside of the museum, Centraal Museum Utrecht wants to broaden the views of the public and commit to a bigger engagement between the museum and the public. The exhibition program is also tailored to fit these ambitions and goals.¹⁸⁸

This second empirical chapter is focused on Centraal Museum Utrecht. The central subquestion in this chapter is: Which broader societal messages did Centraal Museum Utrecht integrate in its exhibitions on female visual artists during the period 1990-2005 in the Netherlands? To answer this question, I first analyse the documents related to the inner workings of Centraal Museum Utrecht during this period, such as policy documents and meeting notes. These documents facilitate me in identifying the overall positionality of the museum in light of an intersectional lens. In the second step of the analysis, I present an overview of the exhibitions that were hosted by Centraal Museum Utrecht between 1990 and 2005. Based on this overview, I examine the representation of female visual artists in these exhibitions.

Positionality of Centraal Museum Utrecht in the policies

Centraal Museum Utrecht has different locations as already mentioned before, this analysis focuses solely on the museum located on the Agnietenstraat 1. The municipality is the main employer of the museum and, in alignment with the museum, decides on the policies, the purchases and the exhibitions are decided.¹⁸⁹ The funding for the exhibitions and educational projects also mostly comes from the municipality, as can be seen in the correspondence emails and faxes where the museum and the municipality discuss the budget and purchases for the museum.¹⁹⁰ Centraal Museum Utrecht discusses the first policy in 1996, which policy is focused on the exhibitions and the presentation of the collection. The museum describes

¹⁸⁷ Stichting Centraal Museum, 'Jaarrekening 2023'.

¹⁸⁸ Stichting Centraal Museum, 'Jaarrekening 2023'.

¹⁸⁹ Centraal Museum Utrecht, '1996-1998', 15-18 Correspondentie Met de Gemeente Utrecht, 1996-2007 (Utrecht, n.d.), 1824 Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1995-2008, Het Utrechts Archief.

¹⁹⁰ Centraal Museum Utrecht, '1996-1998'.

itself in the policy as ‘five collections, one museum’.¹⁹¹ The five collections are: the city history, applied arts, fashion, classical art and contemporary art. For the contemporary art exhibitions, the museum wants artists who use humour and imagination in their art as a reaction to the borders of contemporary art.¹⁹² Additionally, in the presentation, the content of the exhibition is questioned by the design of the exhibitions. Centraal Museum Utrecht thereby focuses on the reaction and the emotion of the visitor.

In 1997, the curators discuss a new policy for 1997-2003, where the tasks of the museum are described:

*‘Centraal Museum sets itself the task of collecting, managing and researching the Dutch – up to around 1700 expressly Utrecht’s – heritage in the field of visual arts, city’s history and applied arts, in order to arrive at a coherent collection, with the aim of making this collection accessible and showing it to the public as the integrated collection of the city of Utrecht in the Centraal Museum. In addition, by organising educational, cultural and other activities, the Centraal Museum aims to promote cultural participation, particularly in Utrecht itself. Finally, the Centraal Museum will act as a platform for international and contemporary visual art and design’.*¹⁹³

In the policy of 1996-1999, the museum still speaks of the five collections. In addition, it concentrates on two main tasks for the museum. First, the primary responsibility of the Centraal Museum Utrecht is to manage and shape the collection. The second task is the presentation of the collection, organising educational activities and communicating to the outside world in a broad sense. In both of these tasks, it can be recognized that the Centraal Museum Utrecht values the quality of the exhibition and the reaction of the visitor to this exhibition. Accordingly, a reaction of the visitor could be in line with societal messages in exhibitions. Yet, the museum emphasises the art and the lay out of the exhibition to evoke the emotional reaction.¹⁹⁴ Thus, the messages in the art and the design of the exhibition is more important than the societal influences in the exhibitions.

¹⁹¹ Centraal Museum Utrecht, ‘1996, Bijlagen’, 1-10 Agenda’s En Notulen van Het Conservatorenoverleg, 1995-1999, 2002 (Utrecht, n.d.), 1824 Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1995-2008, Het Utrechts Archief.

¹⁹² Centraal Museum Utrecht, ‘1996, Bijlagen’.

¹⁹³ Centraal Museum Utrecht, ‘1997, Bijlagen’, 1-10 Agenda’s En Notulen van Het Conservatorenoverleg, 1995-1999, 2002 (Utrecht, n.d.), Het Utrechts Archief.

¹⁹⁴ Centraal Museum Utrecht, ‘1997, Bijlagen’.

In the correspondence with the municipality, the municipality discusses the target audience policy. Since the 1980s, the municipality promotes a ‘positive action policy’ where women and disabled people in the operations of the municipality. Women and disabled people would be better represented in the workspace and the municipality would then become a more diverse place. In the late 1980s, migrant communities are added to this policy to create a multicultural dimension in the municipality.¹⁹⁵ This multicultural character should, according to the municipality, be adopted by the entire organisation of the municipality, so by the museum as well. The policy should be implemented when hiring new employees and the museum is urged to participate in this.¹⁹⁶ With this policy and the awareness of diverse organisation, the municipality demonstrates that emancipation and equal treatment are on the municipal agenda, and with the implementation in the other parts of the organisation, also on the agenda of the museum. In the exhibition policies of Centraal Museum Utrecht, diversity or highlighting minority groups is not discussed. The main focus seems to be the city and attracting visitors to the exhibitions and events of the museum.

Exhibitions

After analysing the practices and policies of Centraal Museum Utrecht, it is also vital to look into the exhibitions themselves. In 1994, the curators of the museum discuss different exhibitions, one of these is the exhibition with the working title ‘Female Thinking’. As described by the curators, the emancipation wave emerged in the 1970s, which led to new approaches to feminism in relation to art. This exhibition could present the art that is made after this new approach and by a new generation of feminist artists.¹⁹⁷ The curators are enthusiastic in the meeting notes but the exhibition title or an exhibition with this description is not mentioned again in the meeting notes or an exhibition program. The awareness of feminism and the women’s emancipation of the second wave, shows that the museum does see these themes as important. Why the exhibition eventually did not happen is not clarified in the documents.

Looking more into the exhibition program, as shown in Figure 4, female visual artists are underrepresented in the museum between 1990 and 2005. To be precise, not even 10%, 17

¹⁹⁵ Centraal Museum Utrecht, ‘1996-1998’.

¹⁹⁶ Centraal Museum Utrecht, ‘1996-1998’.

¹⁹⁷ Centraal Museum Utrecht, ‘1994’, 10-14 Agenda’s En Notulen van Het Conservatorenoverleg, Met Bijlagen, 1986-1991, 1994 (Utrecht, n.d.), 1823 Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1970-1994, Het Utrechts Archief.

in total out of the 171 exhibitions are presenting female visual artists.¹⁹⁸ The presentation of male visual artists (46%) and the presentation of ‘other’ exhibitions (44%) are dominating the exhibition program and complementary graph. The category ‘other’ includes exhibitions on the city’s history and exhibitions that do not highlight specific artists. In the early 2000s, there are only two exhibitions that highlight female visual artists. This is interesting to see, since the national policy from the Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur and Wetenschap is encouraging the representation of women in the cultural sector.¹⁹⁹ In correspondence between the municipality and the museum, two aims of the programming of the museums are discussed: to create icons and to better the position of the museum in the region. Mostly male visual artists were mentioned with regards to the creation of icons, presumably resulting in more exhibitions of male visual artists. The position in the region is supported by exhibitions on the city’s history for example, resulting in a large about of exhibitions in the ‘other’ category.²⁰⁰

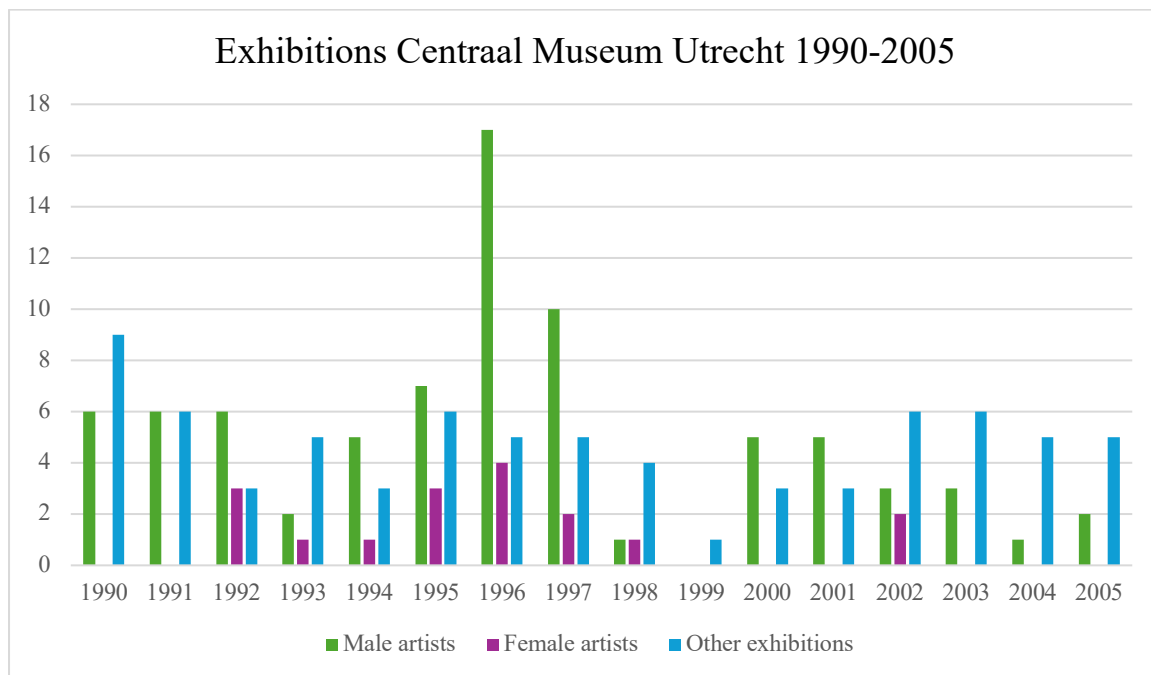


Figure 4: Exhibitions Centraal Museum Utrecht, 1990-2005. Source: J. Duinkerken, ‘Centraal Museum Te Utrecht 1970-1994’ (Het Utrechts Archief), accessed 25 April 2025, <https://www.hetutrechtsarchief.nl/onderzoek/resultaten/archieven?mivast=39&mizig=210&miadt=39&micode=1823&miview=inv2>; J. Duinkerken, ‘Centraal Museum Te Utrecht 1995-2008’ (Het Utrechts Archief), accessed 25 April 2025, <https://www.hetutrechtsarchief.nl/onderzoek/resultaten/archieven?mivast=39&mizig=210&miadt=39&micode=1824&miview=inv2>.

¹⁹⁸ J. Duinkerken, ‘Centraal Museum Te Utrecht 1970-1994’ (Het Utrechts Archief), accessed 25 April 2025, <https://www.hetutrechtsarchief.nl/onderzoek/resultaten/archieven?mivast=39&mizig=210&miadt=39&micode=1823&miview=inv2>; J. Duinkerken, ‘Centraal Museum Te Utrecht 1995-2008’ (Het Utrechts Archief), accessed 25 April 2025, <https://www.hetutrechtsarchief.nl/onderzoek/resultaten/archieven?mivast=39&mizig=210&miadt=39&micode=1824&miview=inv2>.

¹⁹⁹ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, *Cultuur Als Confrontatie*.

²⁰⁰ Centraal Museum Utrecht, ‘1999-2001’, 15-18 Correspondentie Met de Gemeente Utrecht, 1996-2007 (Utrecht, n.d.), 1824 Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1995-2008, Het Utrechts Archief.

To further analyse the exhibitions, three exhibitions are investigated, starting with Sophie Ristelhueber in 1994. This exhibition is part of a bigger project in around twenty cultural institutions in the Netherlands, where they present French contemporary visual art. This exhibition is in collaboration with Association Française d'Action Artistique from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France and the cultural department of the French embassy.²⁰¹

*'The past twelve years, Sophie Ristelhueber has used photography to reconsider areas that are 'worn-out' by human beings, the shapes and materials of the natural world: landscape or building, stone or the human body. Inspired by recent happenings, Ristelhueber made FAIT, a series on the scars of the war in the desert of Kuwait; and recently EVERY ONE, on the scars of the human body, which Sophie Ristelhueber will present in the Centraal Museum'.*²⁰²

The museum is thus presenting art with a social message of the destruction of mankind, which shows that social messages in exhibitions are important for the museum. However, this exhibition is created in collaboration with a French organisation. Centraal Museum Utrecht does still have authority in this exhibition, but less than in exhibitions it organises itself. The art and the additional societal messages are imposed by the other organisations that work together with the Centraal Museum Utrecht.

The second exhibition highlighted is Johan van Oord, Kim Adams and Nicole Eisenman in 1995, with a focus on the presentation of Eisenman. Each artist would have three rooms in the exhibition to use for their art. Nicole Eisenman decided to only use one room, due to the time and effort that is put into one art piece, let alone enough pieces for three rooms.²⁰³ The exhibition is planned to exhibit the three artists together in one wing of the museum, the artists, however, have nothing in common according to the museum. Centraal Museum Utrecht still has three reasons to create this parallel solo exhibition:

'First, to highlight the solism of the artists, instead of subordinating them to the orchestration from the exhibition organiser/director. Second, challenging the artists to be

²⁰¹ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Sophie Ristelhueber, 1994', 162-163, 301-607 Tentoonstellingen in Het Centraal Museum (Utrecht, n.d.), 1823 Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1970-1994, Het Utrechts Archief.

²⁰² Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Sophie Ristelhueber, 1994'.

²⁰³ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Nicole Eisenman, 1995', 301-544 Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Diverse Tentoonstellingen in Utrecht, 1995-2011 (Utrecht, n.d.), 1824 Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1995-2008, Het Utrechts Archief.

compact: zooming in on a selection of their oeuvre and enlarge it to the actual size. Third, the space in the museum lends itself to a division in three'.²⁰⁴

Centraal Museum Utrecht puts the quality of the art and challenging the artists as a key value in the organisation in exhibitions. The chosen artists are not defined in terms of gender or the type of art they make. Nicole Eisenman for example makes cartoon-like drawings and murals, where Johan van Oord makes modern paintings, and Kim Adams works with car parts in installations.²⁰⁵ Eisenman's art is described as denouncing the art history that is coloured by the male perspective.²⁰⁶ This indicates the male dominance in the art world and shows criticism by Eisenman. By exhibiting this art, the Centraal Museum Utrecht shows the awareness of the messages in the art and the reaction it may evoke. The museum is thus performing this social situation to the visitor and trying to convince the visitor of this message.

As a third exhibition, Anna Frydman in 2002 is analysed. Originally, Centraal Museum Utrecht would exhibit Carel Blotkamp in this period, but Anna Frydman takes this place in the program due to cancellation.²⁰⁷ The museum also publishes a book to accompany the exhibition, in which the drawings from the last three years are documented.²⁰⁸

'Feeling, emotion, sensation, experience, perception: these are all terms without a clear definition that Frydman specifically expresses in her drawings in different shapes and forms. She identifies these'.²⁰⁹

With this description of Frydman's art, the museum shows once more the importance of the reactions the exhibitions should evoke. The art specifies vague terms, which makes the visitor think about these terms and leave with food for thought. It is again clear that the quality of the exhibitions and the discussion around the art is more important than societal messages in the exhibitions or the artist's gender.

²⁰⁴ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Kim Adams: Opzet, 1995', 301-544 Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Diverse Tentoonstellingen in Utrecht, 1995-2011 (Utrecht, n.d.), 1824 Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1995-2008, Het Utrechts Archief.

²⁰⁵ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Kim Adams: Opzet, 1995'.

²⁰⁶ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Kim Adams: Opzet, 1995'.

²⁰⁷ Centraal Museum Utrecht, '2002, Verslagen', 1-10 Agenda's En Notulen van Het Conservatorenoverleg, 1995-1999, 2002 (Utrecht, n.d.), 1824 Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1995-2008, Het Utrechts Archief.

²⁰⁸ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Oogcontact: Tekeningen van Anna Frydman, Solotentoonstelling, 2002', 301-544 Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Diverse Tentoonstellingen in Utrecht, 1995-2011 (Utrecht, n.d.), 1824 Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1995-2008, Het Utrechts Archief.

²⁰⁹ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Oogcontact: Tekeningen van Anna Frydman, Solotentoonstelling, 2002'.

The last exhibition analysed in this chapter is Karin van Dam in 2002. Where Stedelijk Museum Schiedam decided to exhibit Karin van Dam together with another artist, Centraal Museum Utrecht decided to present Van Dam in a solo exhibition.²¹⁰ The first thing that stands out and could explain why Van Dam is chosen, is because she is from Utrecht herself and is therefore relevant to the city:

'In every city, you have artists who completely go their own way and develop a special – in the sense of unusual – and often very personal visual language. In Utrecht, Karin van Dam is one of those artists, someone who does not know her equal, neither here nor elsewhere'.²¹¹

This is how Sjarel Ex, the director of Centraal Museum Utrecht in 2002, describes Karin van Dam at the opening of the exhibition. The themes central in the art of Van Dam are the city and more specifically the changing of the city, where the past and the present come together.²¹² In the installations, societal messages are not regularly included. However, for this installation, Karin van Dam is inspired by the city Utrecht. Consequently, together with the exhibition, Van Dam created a so-called 'stroomkaart' (stream map), which contains elements of her own work.²¹³ For this 'stroomkaart', Centraal Museum Utrecht requested a subsidy at the committee of the Stimulerend Beeldende Kunst Utrecht (Stimulating Visual Arts Utrecht), this committee grants half the subsidy. The museum requests another subsidy at the Adviescommissie Audiovisuele Producties (Advisory Committee Audiovisual Productions) for the remaining amount, it is not clear in the archive how much was granted. Both these committees are part of the municipality of Utrecht, thus in the opening speech of Sjarel Ex, the municipality of Utrecht as a whole is thanked for the subsidy.²¹⁴ Centraal Museum Utrecht is performing with this exhibition the importance of the city Utrecht. This is also seen in the subsidy requests, that are submitted to committees of the municipality.

²¹⁰ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Installatie van Karin van Dam. Juicht, Benedenste Deelen Der Aarde - Solotentoonstelling, 2002', 301-544 Stukken Betreffende de Organisatie van Diverse Tentoonstellingen in Utrecht, 1995-2011 (Utrecht, n.d.), 1824 Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1995-2008, Het Utrechts Archief.

²¹¹ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Installatie van Karin van Dam. Juicht, Benedenste Deelen Der Aarde - Solotentoonstelling, 2002'.

²¹² Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Installatie van Karin van Dam. Juicht, Benedenste Deelen Der Aarde - Solotentoonstelling, 2002'.

²¹³ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Installatie van Karin van Dam. Juicht, Benedenste Deelen Der Aarde - Solotentoonstelling, 2002'.

²¹⁴ Centraal Museum Utrecht, 'Installatie van Karin van Dam. Juicht, Benedenste Deelen Der Aarde - Solotentoonstelling, 2002'.

Conclusion

This second empirical chapter analysed the history of Centraal Museum Utrecht, which evolved from a museum about ancient times into an institute consisting of multiple museums that are part of it. For the location analysed in this chapter, five collections are key: the city history, applied arts, fashion, classical art and contemporary art. When researching the policies and practices of the museum, two clear policies were documented in the archive, 1996-1999 and 1997-2003. In both these policies, the quality of the exhibition is the main objective, and challenging the artists and combining the shape and content of the exhibitions are the other main objectives. On the organisational side, the museum is more highlighting diversity and multiculturalism. This new policy is, however, not written by the museum, but by the municipality for all the organisation that they manage. The inclusion of women, disabled people and migrant communities takes effect on the organisational side of the museum. Therefore, the policy is not focused on the exhibitions, educational projects or events hosted by the museum. The last step for Centraal Museum Utrecht is analysing the exhibitions and the exhibition program. The exhibition program immediately shows that female visual artists are underrepresented in the museum. The exhibitions themselves are also not motivated by feminism or women's emancipation, but more by the quality of the art and challenging the artists.

Looking at this analysis through the lens of third-wave feminism intersectionality, it becomes clear that gender does not influence the decision-making or policies of the museum. The municipality does see equal treatment of everyone as important, but its attention is focused on internal changes in the management of the museum, not externally on the exhibitions. To further finalise this analysis of Centraal Museum Utrecht, it is key to look at the cultural performance. The policies emphasis high quality exhibitions, challenging the artists and questioning the exhibitions because of the combination of the shape and the contents. The policies of Centraal Museum Utrecht do not explicitly mention social situations to the visitor. However, in the exhibition on Nicole Eisenman, the social situation in the art is playing a role, as this is criticizing the role of men in the art history. Answering the sub question for this chapter: Which broader societal messages did Centraal Museum Utrecht integrate in its exhibitions on female visual artists during the period 1990-2005 in the Netherlands? Centraal Museum Utrecht does not clearly state societal messages in their exhibitions, and the focus is on the quality and shape of the exhibitions.

Museum Arnhem

Introduction

As stated on the website, Museum Arnhem is located near Arnhem's central train station, "on a high lateral moraine with a magnificent view of the Rhine". In 2022, the museum reopened its doors following an extended period of renovation.²¹⁵ The first full year after the renovation, in 2023, the museum had over 100.000 visitors.²¹⁶ In 1873, the building of the museum was constructed on behalf of the Arnhemse Heerensociëteit (Arnhem Gentlemen's Club).²¹⁷ The Gentlemen's Club consisted of men who had fought in Indonesia or made money from the plantations. The money that used to fund the building was disputed early on and is currently still a topic of intense debate.²¹⁸ In 1888, the building and the garden were expanded. However, because of the high cost of the renovation, the club and the association had to declare bankruptcy.²¹⁹ The municipality bought the building for its unique location and because of the possibility of housing a museum. It took more than 30 years, until 1920, for the museum to open its doors. Between the purchase and the opening, the building was redesigned and renovated to be able to serve as a museum but also housed Belgian refugees during World War I.²²⁰ The museum was first called the 'Gemeentemuseum Arnhem' (Municipal Museum Arnhem) and the collection mostly consisted of art from the Museum van Oudheden (Museum of Antiquities).²²¹

During World War II, the museum building was heavily damaged due to heavy fighting in the area. It was later restored and in the 1950s extended with a new wing.²²² In the 1990's the museum discussed the possibility of renewing the building again and bringing in more space for exhibitions. In light of these plans, the Gemeentemuseum Arnhem separated the collections and moved a significant part of it to a newly created museum: the Museum for Contemporary Art Arnhem (Museum voor de Moderne Kunst Arnhem). The historical collection would go to a former orphanage for expositions and the contemporary art collection

²¹⁵ 'Museum Arnhem | Museum.nl', Museum.nl, accessed 28-04-2025, <https://www.museum.nl/nl/museum-arnhem>.

²¹⁶ Museum Arnhem, 'Jaarverslag 2023' (Arnhem, n.d.).

²¹⁷ Vereniging Vrienden Museum Arnhem, 'Van Heerensociëteit tot modern museum', 13 May 2022, <https://www.vriendenmuseumarnhem.nl/verhalen/van-heerensocieteit-tot-modern-museum/>.

²¹⁸ Vereniging Vrienden Museum Arnhem, 'Van Heerensociëteit tot modern museum'.

²¹⁹ Vereniging Vrienden Museum Arnhem, 'Van Heerensociëteit tot modern museum'.

²²⁰ Vereniging Vrienden Museum Arnhem, 'Van Heerensociëteit tot modern museum'.

²²¹ Vereniging Vrienden Museum Arnhem, 'Van Heerensociëteit tot modern museum'.

²²² Vereniging Vrienden Museum Arnhem, 'Van Heerensociëteit tot modern museum'.

would stay in the museum.²²³ Between 2007 and 2008, the museum renovated because of technical issues and the discussion of a whole new building arose.²²⁴ In 2014, the museum renamed itself Museum Arnhem and the Historisch Museum Arnhem and Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem fused.²²⁵ In this research, I will refer to Museum Arnhem under its current name, because this is how the museum presents itself. At the end of 2017, the museum closed down again for a long period of renovation and expansion. In 2022, Museum Arnhem reopened its doors again for the public with a new look, where art and nature are connected.²²⁶

The museum describes itself as a museum located at the centre of society. It brings art to the wider public and is looking for the connection with the public, the city and the present.²²⁷ Museum Arnhem shows different perspectives and in doing so, the museum works together with different artists, partners and the public that are less represented in museums. The collection is made up of contemporary art, magic realism, neorealism, fashion and jewellery. Museum Arnhem calls itself a pioneer in the collection of art made by women and artists with diverse cultural backgrounds. This way of collecting art and making exhibitions has been part of the working method of the museum since the 1980s.²²⁸ Museum Arnhem describes itself further as a museum for national and international fashion and contemporary art, and since it is a municipal museum, it also concentrates on the city of Arnhem.²²⁹ The exhibitions and the collections are focused on society and the positionality of the public in relation to the art itself. The exhibition program is described as varied and bold.²³⁰

This third and last empirical chapter analyses Museum Arnhem. The central sub question in this chapter is: Which broader societal messages did Museum Arnhem integrate in its exhibitions on female visual artists during the period 1990-2005 in the Netherlands? The first step in the analysis is examining the positionality of Museum Arnhem in more general terms according to the practices and the policy of the museum. This general positionality is further studied through the lens of third-wave feminism intersectionality. Finally, the exhibitions in Museum Arnhem between 1990 and 2005 are investigated. The analysis focuses on the representation of female visual artists and how these artists are represented in

²²³ 'Museum Arnhem kiest voor een nieuwe opzet en andere naam', *Trouw*, 23 May 1995, <https://www.trouw.nl/voorpagina/museum-arnhem-kiest-voor-een-nieuwe-opzet-en-andere-naam~b4da9ca8/>.

²²⁴ Vereniging Vrienden Museum Arnhem, 'Van Heerensociëteit tot modern museum'.

²²⁵ 'Museum Arnhem', *Collectie Gelderland*, accessed 28-04-2025, <https://www.collectiegelderland.nl/organisaties/mmkarnhem>.

²²⁶ Vereniging Vrienden Museum Arnhem, 'Van Heerensociëteit tot modern museum'.

²²⁷ 'Over Ons | Museum Arnhem'.

²²⁸ 'Over Ons | Museum Arnhem'.

²²⁹ 'Collectie | Museum Arnhem', accessed 28-04-2025, <https://www.museumarnhem.nl/nl/collectie>.

²³⁰ 'Missie & Visie | Museum Arnhem', accessed 28-04-2025, <https://www.museumarnhem.nl/nl/over-ons/missie-visie>.

the museum. In this last step, it is also important to look into the cultural performance of Museum Arnhem and how the representation of female visual artists relates to third-wave feminism intersectionality.

Positionality of Museum Arnhem in the policies

Museum Arnhem is funded by the municipality of Arnhem, but the museum is not commissioned by the municipality. Museum Arnhem can independently decide which themes are important in the exhibitions and which policies to implement. The museum however is required to organise exhibitions on the city's history or with a relevance to the city Arnhem to some extent.²³¹ The program of the museum is therefore also rarely discussed in the meetings with the municipality. In these meetings, the municipality does discuss policies for the cultural sector of the city Arnhem. In 1991, the municipality states that the focus should shift from citizens with lower incomes to the migrant communities in the city and involving these groups in the cultural sector. Not only migrant communities as visitors should be involved, but also migrant artists should be represented in the cultural sector. The latter was thought to contribute to increasing the participation of migrant communities as visitors.²³² In the early 1990s, the museum and other cultural institutions have to cut their budgets but the municipality still wants diversity to a core value in the exhibitions and activities in this period.²³³ The continuous emphasis on diversity and representing minorities in the city, reveals the core values of the cultural sector in Arnhem. This continuous focus also demonstrates the awareness of inequalities in society and expressing these inequalities by, for example, presenting art by migrant artists. When this is applied to Museum Arnhem, it shows the museum is performing social situations, like the inequalities of migrant communities, to the visitor and starting a discussion on inequalities in society and how to change that.

Looking more specifically into Museum Arnhem and its policies, the 50/50 policy of Liesbeth Brandt Corstius is noteworthy. Between 1982 and 2000, Liesbeth Brandt Corstius was director of Museum Arnhem. When Brandt Corstius was instated as director of the museum, she presented a policy for the museum where at least 50% of the purchases of art and exhibitions should be on female visual artists.²³⁴ Brandt Corstius states that female visual artists were barely exhibited in museums and being the director of Museum Arnhem, she

²³¹ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, 'Stafvergaderingen Met de Wethouder van Cultuur, 1990-1994', Stukken Betreffende Het Overleg Met de Gemeente Arnhem, 1948-1998. (Arnhem, n.d.), 2141, Gelders Archief.

²³² Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, 'Stafvergaderingen Met de Wethouder van Cultuur, 1990-1994'.

²³³ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, 'Stafvergaderingen Met de Wethouder van Cultuur, 1990-1994'.

²³⁴ 'Liesbeth Brandt Corstius - Een Moedige Museumdirecteur - Is Overleden | Museum Arnhem'.

decided to change this.²³⁵ In an interview with the Volkskrant in 2022, Brandt Corstius states that the advisory council seemed to ‘look over’ the 50/50 policy. One person on the advisory board, a male artist, left the board, but the other members did not seem to think it was important. Liesbeth Brandt Corstius was one of the first museum directors in the Netherlands using positive discrimination in the exhibitions and representing more female visual artists.²³⁶ In the nineties, the policy with a feminist edge, was not discussed much. Liesbeth Brandt Corstius explains:

*‘In the 1990s, I continued the policy, but I no longer shouted it from the rooftops. Feminism had a dirty connotation’.*²³⁷

Brandt Corstius does not elaborate further on the ‘dirty connotation’ of the term feminism. However, this connotation might explain why other museums did not implement a ‘feminist’ policy in the 1990s. The connotation could also explain why ‘feminism’, or ‘third-wave feminism’ is not mentioned in the literature on the movement in the Netherlands and the moderate character of the movement.

The archive of Museum Arnhem does not include policies of the 1990s and 2000s. The years archived are also limited, as this only covers the documentation until 1998. Therefore, a full analysis of the museum’s positionality within the policies is not possible. Nevertheless, the 50/50 policy and the meeting notes with the municipality present clear objectives that indicate the museum’s representation of migrant communities, women and other minority groups. Museum Arnhem is, however, emphasising more on social change instead of institutional changes. The policies implemented are more focused towards society and accentuating existing inequalities, biases, and disadvantages minority groups experience.

Exhibitions

The documentation on exhibitions in the archive go up to the year 2000, however, the chronological documentation goes up to March 1995. The exhibition on magical realists in 1998 and John Rådecker in 2000 are archived too, but between these and March 1995,

²³⁵ Anna van Leeuwen, ‘Liesbeth Brandt Corstius (1940-2022), onvermoeibaar wegbereider voor vrouwelijke kunstenaars’, de Volkskrant, 15 August 2022, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/cultuur-media/liesbeth-brandt-corstius-1940-2022-onvermoeibaar-wegbereider-voor-vrouwelijke-kunstenaars~bfac7a1d/>.

²³⁶ Sarah van Binsbergen, “Kenden wij vrouwelijke kunstenaars? Nee, we konden er niet één noemen”, de Volkskrant, 12 May 2022, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/cultuur-media/kenden-wij-vrouwelijke-kunstenaars-nec-we-konden-er-niet-een-noemen~bdd5eab3/>.

²³⁷ Binsbergen, “Kenden wij vrouwelijke kunstenaars? Nee, we konden er niet één noemen”.

exhibitions are not included in the archive. The timeframe is therefore limited, but the analysis will still critically reflect on the representation of female visual artists in the exhibitions. The first exhibition worth mentioning is Nancy Spero in 1990. Spero is a socially and politically engaged artists who also studies the portrayal of women in art. Furthermore, Spero argues that women are excluded from history and urges women to rewrite history and tell their own stories.²³⁸ Consequently, the themes of feminism and women's emancipation are playing a role in the art of Spero:

*'The position of women and the small amount of power they own, are recurring themes in Spero's work. This is also the reason why only female figures are appearing in her art. With the diversity of female characters, Spero tries to illustrate the history of women. Spero says about this: "Women are present in history, it is just that they have been written out of history, and we have to write ourselves back into it. "'*²³⁹

By presenting art by Nancy Spero, Museum Arnhem is also highlighting the societal messages embedded in her work. The museum is performing these societal messages to the visitor and is trying to convince the visitor of these messages and the rewriting of history. The exhibition also shows the intersectionality of feminism; rewriting history and including women is a more academic movement, but simultaneously Spero demonstrates social activism with her art and portrays abuse of women, for example:

*'She does not shy away from reporting in words and pictures the horrors of war, abuse of women and the artist's poor position in society'.*²⁴⁰

As already discussed, there is not a single definition of 'feminism', therefore it is intersectional and diverse. Spero's portrayal of women and their position, but also the effects of war, correlates with this intersectional character of feminism. Museum Arnhem also shows the evolution in Spero's work and how the messages in her art have changed over time. In the 1960s, Spero shows the horrors of war, and the overall impression of her art is described as dark and heavy. In the 1970s, the central theme in the art of Spero is women as victims of

²³⁸ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1990, Augustus-1991, Januari', Stukken Betreffende Het Organiseren van Tentoonstellingen, Chronologisch per Tentoonstelling Geordend, 1921-2000. (Arnhem, n.d.), 2141, Gelders Archief.

²³⁹ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1990, Augustus-1991, Januari'.

²⁴⁰ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1990, Augustus-1991, Januari'.

assault. In the 1980s, the theme shifts towards women as dynamic and self-aware and the rewriting of history. Museum Arnhem decided to exhibit Nancy Spero, focusing on the evolution in her art and the messages it conveys in particular. The museum thus sees these messages as an important element of the art and as significant for the visitor.

The second relevant exhibition is of Magdalena Abakanowicz in 1990, which is part of Eastern-European Passage that Museum Arnhem organised. The museum is exhibiting different artists of Eastern-European descent in an exhibition series. Abakanowicz captures threat and vulnerability, captivity and liberation in one sculpture.²⁴¹

*'The tension between mankind and the self-created technology is palpable. The objects sometimes win from mankind, are left behind and then at the same time show those human traits of vulnerability and aggression'.*²⁴²

In the beginning of Abakanowicz international career, the world was still divided in the 'West' and the 'East'. This division and the influence of mankind on nature inspired her for the sculptures. Abakanowicz saw how vulnerable the surroundings were, and restoring these surroundings or creating awareness for the restoration of the surroundings was her main goal.²⁴³ With this exhibition, Museum Arnhem is sending this message, of mankind destroying the surroundings, to the visitor. The museum is making space for messages in the exhibition on the climate and the influence mankind has on the climate. But not only messages about the climate are present in this exhibition, the division of the world and the difference between the 'West' and the 'East' are part of the agenda of Abakanowicz. This is a very political topic and exhibiting these sculptures, displays the positionality of the museum when it comes to political themes in art. Museum Arnhem sees the political themes as important in exhibitions, and therefore also decides on this exhibition.

The third and last exhibition on a female visual artist analysed in this chapter, is the exhibition of Marlow Moss in 1994. Interestingly, the museum is promoting the exhibition of Moss in the relation to Piet Mondriaan. The art of Moss is therefore also placed in the framework of Mondriaan and Mondriaan as the inspiration of Moss.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1990, Augustus-1991, Januari'.

²⁴² Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1990, Augustus-1991, Januari'.

²⁴³ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1990, Augustus-1991, Januari'.

²⁴⁴ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1994, Juli-1995, Maart', Stukken Betreffende Het Organiseren van Tentoonstellingen, Chronologisch per Tentoonstelling Geordend, 1921-2000. (Arnhem, n.d.), 2141, Gelders Archief.

'Moss has eventually never known if Mondriaan changed to multiplying the lines because of her, or if he was already experimenting with this on his own in the atelier'.²⁴⁵

Museum Arnhem does insinuate that Moss might have influenced Mondriaan, but this is not confirmed and can never be confirmed, due to both artists being deceased. By placing Moss in this framework of Mondriaan, her art and the exhibition are not seen independently.

Furthermore, the museum does not only look into the influences the artists might have had on each other, but also places Moss in the constructivist style of Mondriaan.²⁴⁶ Even though, the two artists work in the same style, Mondriaan works intuitive and Moss more mathematical in her paintings.²⁴⁷ During the exhibition, Museum Arnhem is selling a biography of Marlow Moss, written by Florette Dijkstra in 1992. Moss's personal life, her art, and the relation to Mondriaan are presented in this publication. The comparison to Mondriaan is in this publication again one of the main topics, even their appearances are described as similar:

'In her appearance too, she displays the choice to be 'someone else' than the person she was at birth; the decision to thus be herself. Yet it is perhaps not only her work but also her appearance that has kept her in the minds of many as the "female Mondriaan"'.²⁴⁸

In this quote, Moss is even named 'female Mondriaan'. Marlow Moss seems to be remembered only in relation to other people like Piet Mondriaan, but also her girlfriend Nettie Nijhoff, with whom she lived for several years.²⁴⁹ So not only Museum Arnhem, but also art-enthusiasts and researchers do not see Moss as a stand-alone artist. When taking the 50/50 policy into consideration, it would be more logical for Museum Arnhem to exhibit Moss as an artist alone and not in relation to others. The male dominance in the art world and museums surfaces in this case and Museum Arnhem is emphasising the relation between Moss and Mondriaan more than the art of Moss itself. Therefore, the messages in the exhibition transferred to the visitor, are less on Moss's art itself and more on this relation and the comparisons.

²⁴⁵ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1994, Juli-1995, Maart'.

²⁴⁶ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1994, Juli-1995, Maart'.

²⁴⁷ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1994, Juli-1995, Maart'.

²⁴⁸ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1994, Juli-1995, Maart'.

²⁴⁹ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1994, Juli-1995, Maart'.

Even though this next exhibition is not specifically on female visual artists, the theme is interesting to consider in the performance of the museum. In 1994, Museum Arnhem celebrated 75 years of voting rights for women and 100 years of women's interest. The museum decided to divide the exhibition in two components, the historical side and the contemporary art side. The historical side gives a summary of the fight for voting rights and the organisations that fought for equal treatment and laws for women. This historical component led to the museum asking female visual artists to paint their visions of the theme 'women and voting rights', these art works were exhibit.²⁵⁰ Museum Arnhem intended to have this exhibition travel around the country to other museums to share the knowledge and the messages in the art. The idea of the exhibition added to the program of other museums reveals that Museum Arnhem considers women's (voting) rights and the art by female visual artists as important. With the exhibition travelling, the museum would then not only perform the messages of equal rights for women to their own visitors, but also to other visitors in the Dutch museums and with that, other groups of visitors that might not be part of the target audience of Museum Arnhem.

Interestingly, the whole exhibition, and especially the contemporary art section, is commissioned by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Female visual artists can sign up to participate in the exhibition and the chosen artists will receive an item from the ministry and have to make a piece of art with this. In the list of requirements for the female visual artists, the ministry emphasises that migrant women are explicitly invited to sign up.²⁵¹ The ministry demonstrates the importance of migrant communities in the Netherlands and the representation of these communities in the cultural sector. The combination of the group women and the migrant communities is even more interesting to see, because this shows the intersectionality of feminism where race is playing a bigger role. As mentioned before, the Ministry of Internal Affairs commissioned Museum Arnhem to organise this exhibition. This then raises the question why Museum Arnhem is chosen for this exhibition. In the documentation in the archive this is not further discussed. Nevertheless, the decision for Museum Arnhem could come from the 50/50 policy and the already existing representation of female visual artists in the museum.

²⁵⁰ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1994, Januari-Juli', Stukken Betreffende Het Organiseren van Tentoonstellingen, Chronologisch per Tentoonstelling Geordend, 1921-2000. (Arnhem, n.d.), 2141, Gelders Archief.

²⁵¹ Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, '1994, Januari-Juli'.

Conclusion

In the third and final empirical chapter, Museum Arnhem was central in the analysis. The extensive history and several focus points eventually led the museum to exhibit contemporary art. Although not many policies were available for the analysis, the 50/50 policy showed a clear general position of Museum Arnhem. The 50/50 policy by former director Liesbeth Brandt Corstius was innovative in 1982 and therefore still relevant in the 1990s and 2000s. This policy states that at least 50% of the exhibitions and the art purchased should be of female visual artists. Museum Arnhem was one of the first museums to positively discriminate in this manner. In meeting notes with the municipality, it is clear that, besides highlighting female visual artists in the museum, migrant communities should also be more represented in the art and the practices of the cultural sector of Arnhem. The themes in the exhibitions on female visual artists are worth mentioning, because the ones analysed all have a social situation in their artworks. The oppression of women, mankind destroying the world, and equal rights for women are all themes returning in the exhibitions on female visual artists. Museum Arnhem demonstrates with these exhibitions that social situations are not something to shy away from as a museum. The museum is even chosen by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to host an exhibition on women's voting rights and the women's movement. Museum Arnhem being chosen for this exhibition reveals the national importance in the representation of female visual artists in the Netherlands.

Analysing Museum Arnhem through an intersectional lens, the third-wave intersectionality is present in the exhibition themes, and the focus on representing migrant communities in the cultural sector of Arnhem also shows the intersectionality of feminism and women's emancipation. From the municipality there are also influences in representing migrant communities in the exhibitions. Answering the sub question for this chapter: Which broader societal messages did Museum Arnhem integrate in their exhibitions on female visual artists during the period 1990-2005 in the Netherlands? Museum Arnhem has integrated societal themes and messages in its exhibitions on female visual artists. These societal messages go even further than women's emancipation and third-wave feminism.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to identify the positionality of Dutch museums vis-à-vis third-wave feminism and female visual artists between 1990 and 2005, focusing on three regional museums: Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Centraal Museum Utrecht, and Museum Arnhem. The study uses a qualitative analysis of museum policies, exhibition programs, exhibitions, and their engagement with social themes. An extra dimension is added by applying the cultural performance theory to the museum policies and the exhibitions. Combining these sources and methods, this research provides new perspectives on the intersection of feminism and museum studies in the Netherlands.

After analysing the academic debate on third-wave feminism and museum studies, it is clear the Dutch academic debate falls short. The focus lies on the emancipation of migrant women, because white women are already considered liberated. Even though the Dutch academic debate is present, it does not highlight many perspectives. Add to that the debate in the museum studies, where feminist theorists are suggesting a new feminist museology and the importance of this research is clear. The suggested feminist museology shifts the focus from object-oriented research to research on museum practices and the representation of female visual artists.

The results show that while there was a growing awareness of gender issues and the representation of female visual artists in Dutch museums during this period, the implementation was often missing in the programming. Third-wave feminism intersectionality, which recognizes the overlapping and multiple forms of oppression faced by individuals, is crucial in understanding the limitations for the museums in representing female visual artists. For instance, the underrepresentation of female visual artists in exhibitions highlights the ongoing challenges in achieving gender equality within the art world. Moreover, the analysis of cultural performance within the three museums reveals how exhibitions serve as a medium for transferring societal messages. Cultural performance theory emphasises the role of museums as active participants in shaping cultural narratives and identities. By showcasing art that reflects the complexities of women's experiences, museums can challenge the traditional representation and create a more inclusive dialogue about gender and the role of women.

In the policies of the Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap there is a growing awareness of the importance of cultural diversity. The term cultural diversity is first focused on migrant communities in the Netherlands, their representation, and their engagement in the cultural sector. In the 2000s, cultural diversity is seen more broadly, where

women should also be better represented and more engaged in the cultural sector. However, the focus of the national policies for the cultural sector remains focused on the Dutch heritage in cultural institutions. The three museums each exhibited a different level of engagement with third-wave feminism intersectional principles, which emphasize inclusivity and diversity. Stedelijk Museum Schiedam demonstrated a slow shift towards recognizing the contributions of female visual artists. However, the overall representation remained disproportionately low. The museum's policies reflected a commitment to high-quality exhibitions, but the focus on gender equality was not structurally visible in the exhibition programs. Centraal Museum Utrecht also struggled with the representation of female visual artists, with less than 10% of the exhibitions featuring female visual artists. Despite acknowledging diversity in the policies for the internal structures, the choices for the exhibitions often showcase the male dominance and the historical component over female visual artists and feminist themes. Museum Arnhem, under former director Liesbeth Brandt Corstius, implemented an innovative 50/50 policy that aimed to ensure equal representation of female and male visual artists in exhibitions. This policy not only highlighted the museum's commitment to gender equality, but it also positioned the museum as a leader in the movement towards inclusivity in the Dutch cultural sector. In the exhibitions in Museum Arnhem there is also more room for feminist themes to be presented to the visitor.

These findings suggest that progress was made in integrating feminist perspectives into museum practices, the overall impact of third-wave feminism on Dutch museums was limited. The feminist initiative that are individual changes, like the 50/50 policy of Brandt Corstius, or structural changes in the management of the museums. The lack of consistent representation of female visual artists and the emphasis on the male-dominated exhibitions indicate that the inequalities in the art world are not yet fully visible for museums. This thesis highlights the need for museums to actively engage with feminist theories and practices to create a more inclusive cultural landscape. By prioritizing the representation of diverse voices in the broadest sense, museums can play a crucial role in challenging societal norms and promoting gender equality in the art world and cultural sector.

A limitation of this study is the focus on only three regional museums, which may not fully represent the broader landscape of Dutch regional museums during this period. Besides that, the focus on Dutch regional museums also limits this research, because museums each have their own goals and target audience. Another limitation of this study is the archives; the archival material was not always complete and therefore important years in the analysis are missing. It would, for example, be interesting to analyse Museum Arnhem after 2000 and

until 1998. Nevertheless, the archives and the documentation found, did give a general understanding of the museums. The analysis carried out and the findings can therefore still answer the research question.

Further research could investigate the evolution of museum practices and the representation of female visual artists after 2005, especially when considering fourth-wave feminism and the impact of digital media on art and representation. Additionally, increasing the scope of the museums to more regional museums and museums that focus on contemporary art is also contributing to the museum studies in relation to feminism. The regional museums are tied to governmental and municipal plans, therefore, widening this scope can give new insights. Lastly, researching experiences and contributions of marginalised groups within the feminist movement, such as women of colour and LGBTQ+ artist, could provide a more nuanced understanding of the intersectionality within the feminist discourse in the arts.

In conclusion, this thesis underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing the ongoing challenges related to gender representation in museums. By using the principles of third-wave feminism, Dutch museums have the potential to transform their practices and become more inclusive spaces that reflect the diverse narratives of society. As cultural institutions, museums must continue to evolve and adapt, guaranteeing that they not only preserve history, but also actively contribute to shaping a more equal future for all artists and audiences.

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Appendix I

Interview/vragenlijst:

1. Wat is of was uw formele functie binnen (museum x)? Heeft u meerdere functies gehad bij het museum? Zo ja, welke?
2. Wat is de centrale taakomschrijving van het museum?
3. Welke missie heeft het museum en wat zijn de belangrijkste doelen?
4. Op welke maatschappelijke thema's richt (museum x) zich in het bijzonder?
5. Welke algemene inhoudelijke afwegingen worden er gemaakt bij het opzetten van een tentoonstelling bij (museum x)?
6. Welke factoren spelen er een rol bij het selecteren van specifieke kunstenaars voor een tentoonstelling bij (museum x)?
7. Welke factoren spelen er een rol bij het selecteren van specifieke kunstwerken voor een tentoonstelling bij (museum x)?
8. In hoeverre is de besluitvorming rond deze onderwerpen veranderd? Hoe verliep de besluitvorming hierrond tijdens de jaren 1990?
9. Op welke manier positioneert het museum zich in het museumlandschap in Nederland?
10. Op welke manier hebben de cultuurplannen op landelijk en gemeentelijk niveau een invloed uitgeoefend op het tentoonstellingsprogramma van het museum de afgelopen jaren? Hoe verliep dit tijdens de jaren 1990?
11. In hoeverre hebben investeerders en andere sponsors invloed op het tentoonstellingsprogramma in het museum?

English:

1. What is or was your formal position within (museum x)? Did you have other positions within this museum? If so, which ones?
2. What is the central task of the museum?
3. What is the museum's mission and what are its main goals?
4. What social issues does (museum x) focus on in particular?
5. What are the general considerations in contents that are made when setting up an exhibition at (museum x)?
6. Which factors play a role in selecting specific artist for an exhibition at (museum x)?
7. Which factors come into play when selecting specific works of art for an exhibition at (museum x)?

8. To what extent has decision-making around these issues changed? What did the decision-making process around this during the 1990s look like?
9. In what way does the museum position itself in the museum landscape in the Netherlands?
10. In what way have cultural plans at national and municipal level influenced the museum's exhibition program in recent years? What did that look like during the 1990s?
11. To what extent do investors and other sponsors influence the museum's exhibition program?